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JOURNAL

OF

MAURICE DE GUÉRIN

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MAURICE DE GUÉRIN

EDITED

BY G. S. TREBUTIEN

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL AND LITERARY MEMOIR

BY SAINTE-BEUVE

Translated from the Twentieth French Edition

BY

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NOTE.

A NEW translation of the *Journal of Maurice de Guérin* needs no other justification than the deepening interest in Nature and the rare quality of a writer of whom Matthew Arnold wrote that he had "a sense of what there is adorable and secret in the life of Nature." The earlier American translation has been out of print for a number of years; and a new and wider constituency of those born to understand and value De Guérin awaits his *Journal*. The present translation is put forth with the hope that it may bring to the knowledge of these lovers of Nature a work which has appealed to the best minds, and taken its place among the classics of that kind of observation and meditation which find their inspiration in Nature, and their end in the fuller fellowship of the soul with its ancient companion and teacher.

MARCH, 1891.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
MEMOIR	1
JOURNAL	57

MEMOIR

By SAINTE-BEUVE

MEMOIR.

ON the 15th of May, 1840, the *Revue des Deux Mondes* published an article by George Sand on a young poet whose name had been until then entirely unknown, — Georges-Maurice de Guérin, who had died during the previous year, on the 19th of July, 1839, at the age of twenty-nine. His title to the posthumous honour of being thus unexpectedly ranked as a star among the "poets of France" was a magnificent and singular composition, *Le Centaure*, in which all the primitive powers of Nature were felt, expressed, and personified energetically, yet with taste and sobriety, and in which a master was all at once made manifest, — the "André Chénier of pantheism," as a friend had already named him. Some fragments of letters, outpourings that revealed a tender and beautiful soul, formed, around this colossal piece of antique marble, a charming choir of half-veiled semi-confidences; and this glimpse caught in

passing made one long eagerly for the rest. From that time forward there existed among the youth a chosen school, a generation sprinkled with admirers for whom the name of Guérin became a watchword, who rallied around this youthful memory, honoured it with secret fervour, and looked forward to the moment when the full work should be given to them, when the whole soul should be unveiled before their eyes. Twenty years have elapsed since then; and difficulties, scruples, a many-sided delicacy of a nature to be respected, have delayed the accomplishment of the wish formed by friendship in the name of art. Sufficient time had already elapsed for Guérin to be imitated by other poets, who through this imitation had the appearance of being quite original, while he himself had not yet been published or made known. But in the mean while, five years ago, there had appeared, still under the reserve of semi-publicity, the *Reliquiæ* of a sister of the poet, Eugénie de Guérin, his equal if not his superior in talent and in soul.[1] The desire to know and to possess at last the complete works of the brother

[1] The title of this volume is: "Eugénie de Guérin, RELIQUIÆ . . . Caen, imprimerie de Hardel, 1855," with this note: "Ce volume, tiré à petit nombre, ne se vend pas."

was thus increased and quickened. We take pleasure in announcing that they are to appear. Faithful friends have sorted and prepared the material ; and the editing has been done by the scholarly and poetic antiquarian, M. Trebutien, who has devoted to it work as careful as that which a fervent monk of the Middle Ages would have given to the writing and illumination of a holy missal, the treasure of his abbey.

There was no exaggeration in the first impression received in 1840 ; to-day it is entirely justified and confirmed : the modern school counts among its number another poet, another landscapist. But in the first place, I must needs carry him back to his true starting-point, to his very beginnings. It was in 1833 that Maurice de Guérin, who was then only in his twenty-third year, began to develop and expand within his familiar circle that first flower of sentiment, which only to-day is revealed to us, and which is to yield us all its perfume. Born on the 5th of August, 1810, he belonged to that second generation of the century which was no longer "two" or "three years" old, but fully ten or eleven, when it brought forth that new brood of the Mussets, the Montalemberts, the Guérins : it is intentionally that I associate these names. Born under the beautiful sky of the South, of

an ancient family, noble and poor, Maurice de Guérin was a dreamer from his infancy; and, his ideas being easily turned toward religion, he was led quite naturally to the thought of joining the Church. He was not twelve years old when, early in January, 1822, he set out for the first time, poor exiled bird, from his turrets of Cayla, and arrived at Toulouse to pursue his studies, — I believe at the Petit Séminaire. He came to Paris to complete them, at the Collége Stanislas. On leaving there, after having hesitated some time, after having returned to his family and again seen his sisters and his sisters' friends, then it was that, troubled, sensitive, and even, we may conjecture, secretly wounded, he went to La Chênaie far more to seek rest and forgetfulness than led by a religious vocation, — one already much followed and very uncertain.

He had loved, he had wept and sung his sorrows during a season passed in his beautiful South, the last before his departure for La Chênaie. Witness these verses, dated from La Roche d'Onelle, which relate to the autumn of 1832: —

"Les siècles ont creusé dans la roche vieillie
Des creux où vont dormir des gouttes d'eau de pluie;
Et l'oiseau voyageur, qui s'y pose le soir,
Plonge son bec avide en ce pur réservoir.

Ici je viens pleurer sur la roche d'Onelle
De mon premier amour l'illusion cruelle ;
Ici mon cœur souffrant en pleurs vient s'épancher . . .
Mes pleurs vont s'amasser dans le creux du rocher . . .
Si vous passez ici, colombes passagères,
Gardez-vous de ces eaux : les larmes sont amères."

No young Greek, disciple of Theocritus or of Moschus, could have spoken better than this young Levite who seemed in search of an apostle.

Guérin arrived at La Chênaie at the beginning of winter ; he was there on Christmas, 1832. He had found his haven of rest. La Chênaie, "that sort of oasis in the midst of the steppes of Brittany," where, in front of the château, stretches a vast garden divided by a terrace planted with linden-trees, with a very small chapel at the farther end, — this was the place of retreat of M. de Lamennais (M. Féli, as he was familiarly called) ; and he usually had with him four or five young men who, in this country life, pursued their studies with zeal, in a spirit of piety, of meditation, and of true liberty. The moment when Guérin arrived there was one of the most memorable, one of the most decisive for the master ; this can be affirmed with certainty and precision now that we are able to read the private correspondence of Lamennais during that

period. This great and vehement mind, which could not rest except in final solutions, after having attempted the open union of Catholicism and Democracy, and having preached it in his journal with the voice of a prophet, had seen himself forced to suspend the publication of *L'Avenir.* He had gone to Rome to consult the supreme authority; he had returned, having been treated personally with respect, but with evident disapproval, and he had appeared to submit; perhaps he even thought himself sincerely submissive, while he was already meditating and revolving thoughts of vengeance and retaliation. M. de Lamennais, who was wholly one thing or wholly another, without any gradations, showed the strangest contrast in his double nature. Oftentimes he had what Buffon, in speaking of animals of prey, called a "soul of wrath;" at times, and no less often, he had a sweetness, a tenderness, that would delight little children, a soul thoroughly charming; and he would pass from one to the other in the twinkling of an eye. The veil which has since then been rent, bringing to view the stormy and shifting background of his doctrines, was then scarcely lifted. It seems to me that none of those who have known and loved M. de Lamennais during these years of crisis and of sorrow-

ful passion, need, from whatever point of view, either blush or repent. He had attempted a reconciliation, impossible, I admit, but most lofty in aim and well suited to satisfy noble hearts and generous and religious imaginations. Warned that he was mistaken and that his views were not sanctioned, he paused before the obstacle, bowed before the sentence rendered, suffered, was silent, and prayed. To examine him closely at times, one would have said that he was in danger of dying. One day (March 24, 1833), being seated behind the chapel under the two Scotch fir-trees which stood there, he had taken his cane and outlined a grave on the turf, saying to one of his disciples who was near him, "It is here I wish to lie; but no tombstone, only a simple grassy mound. Oh, how good to be there!" Had he died, in fact, at that hour or during the months that followed, had he been crushed by his internal struggle, what a beautiful and unsullied memory he would have left behind him! What fame as a faithful one, a hero, almost a martyr! What a mysterious subject for meditation and revery for those who love to study great destinies suddenly cut off!

But here he is not in question except with reference to Maurice de Guérin, who, admirer and proselyte as he then was, was to feel

this influence of Lamennais only as a passing phase ; a year or two later he was wholly freed and released from it. If by degrees he became emancipated from the faith, if he was soon carried away by the spirit of the century, it was not as a follower of the great deserter, but under his own leadership, and he went astray along paths of his own ; in 1835, he was no longer the disciple of any man or of any system. After three years of an independent and wholly Parisian life, at the approach of death, his family had the consolation of seeing him again become a Christian.

But Guérin, though he was to emancipate himself from this world of La Chênaie through his intellect, belonged to it radically in feeling, in the depth of his impressions, and by the first and genuine evidences of his talent, — so much so that in the literary perspective of the past he takes his place there as a portrait in its frame from which it still remains distinct ; he is and will remain in the future its landscapist, its painter, its true poet. By the side of the brilliant names of Montalembert, of Lacordaire, which sounded like trumpets in the outer world, there was (who would have thought it ?) in that house of silence and of peace, a young man, obscure, timid, whom Lamennais, absorbed in his

apocalyptic social visions, never distinguished from the others, to whom he attributed only very ordinary faculties, but who, at the very time that the master was forging upon his anvil those thunderbolts called *Les Paroles d'un Croyant,* wrote private pages that were far more natural, far fresher, — let us be frank, far more beautiful, — and made to touch forever those souls enamoured of that universal life which is exhaled and inhaled in the depths of the woods, on the borders of the sea.

Guérin arrived at La Chênaie in winter, in the heart of the dead season, when all is bare, when the forests are "rust-colour," beneath this sky of Brittany always cloudy, "and so low that it seems as though it would crush you;" but when the spring comes, "the sky lifts," the woods take back their life, and all again becomes smiling. Winter, however, is slow in its leave-taking; the young and loving observer notes in his journal its tardy flight, its frequent returns: —

"*March 3rd.* — This day has enchanted me. For the first time in many days the sun has shown himself radiant in all his beauty. He has opened the buds of leaves and flowers, and has awakened in my breast a thousand sweet thoughts.

"Again the clouds take on their light and graceful forms, and outline charming fancies against the azure of the sky. The woods have not yet put forth their leaves, but they have assumed such a gay and lively air that it gives them quite a new aspect. Everything is preparing for the great holiday of Nature."

This holiday, so much desired, and of which he had had but a foretaste, delays its coming; many stormy days still intervene. All this is noted, painted, and above all, felt; this young child of the South draws from I know not what well of inherent sadness a peculiar instinct for understanding and loving from the very first day this Nature of the North on the borderland of tempests.

"*(March) 8th.* — A day of snow. A south-easterly wind whirls it into eddies, into great columns of dazzling whiteness. It melts as it falls. Here we are, carried back into the very heart of winter, after a few smiles of spring. The wind is quite cold; the little singing-birds, so newly come, shiver with the cold, as do the flowers. The cracks in the partitions and in the windows wail as in January, and I, in my sorry covering, shrink as Nature does.

"*9th.* — More snow, showers, gusts of wind, cold. Poor Brittany, thou indeed hast need of a little verdure to gladden thy sombre countenance! Oh, throw off quickly thy winter cloak and don for me thy spring mantle woven of leaves and flowers! When shall I see the folds of thy robe floating at the will of the winds? . . .

"*11th.* — It has snowed all night. When I arose, I had a glimpse, through my badly closed shutters, of that great white sheet which had silently spread itself over the fields. The black tree-trunks rise like columns of ebony from an ivory court; this hard and sharp contrast and the dismal aspect of the woods are peculiarly saddening. Nothing is to be heard, — not a living thing except a few sparrows, which, twittering as they fly, seek refuge among the fir-trees that stretch out their long arms laden with snow. The centre of these dense trees is impenetrable to frost; it is a shelter prepared by Providence, and full well the little birds know it.

"I have taken a look at our primroses; each one bore its little burden of snow with head bent under the weight. These pretty flowers, so rich in colouring, produced a charming effect under their white hoods. I saw whole clusters

covered with a single mass of snow ; all these laughing flowers, thus veiled and bending over one another, looked like a group of young girls surprised by a shower and taking refuge under a white apron."

This reminds one of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. Guérin, without intention, by natural selection, and through affinity of talent, belongs to his school. At this very moment he had finished reading his *Études de la Nature,* and was still enjoying its charm : "It is one of those books which one wishes would never come to an end. From it there is little to be gained for science, but much for poetry, for the elevation of the soul and to aid in the contemplation of Nature. This book clears and enlightens a sense which we all possess, but which is veiled, vague, and almost devoid of activity,—that sense which gathers in physical beauties and yields them to the soul." And he insists upon this second process of reflection, which spiritualizes, which blends and "harmonizes" into a whole and under one ruling sentiment the features of Nature previously observed. This indeed is to be his own manner ; in the faithful images which he offers us of Nature, man, the soul, is always present ; it is life reflected and given

back by life. His slightest sketches thus have their meaning and their charm.

"*(March) 19th.* — A walk in the forest of Coëtquen. I came upon a spot quite remarkable for its wildness: the road descends by a sudden declivity into a narrow ravine where a little stream flows over a bed of slate, which gives to the waters a blackish tinge disagreeable at first sight, but which ceases to be so when you notice how it harmonizes with the black trunks of the old oaks, with the sombre foliage of the ivy, and how it contrasts with the smooth white limbs of the birches. A high north wind swept over the forest and made it utter deep roarings. The trees writhed in the blasts of the wind like madmen. Through the branches we could see the clouds coursing rapidly past in strange, black masses, and seeming to graze the tree-tops. At times there would come in this great, sombre, floating veil a rift through which a ray of sunshine darted and glided into the heart of the forest like a lightning-flash. These sudden, passing gleams of light gave to these depths, so majestic in their gloom, something strange and haggard, like a smile on the lips of death.

"*20th.* — Winter takes leave of us smiling; he bids us farewell with a glorious sun resplen-

dent in a sky as clear and pure as a Venetian glass. Time has taken one more step toward its goal. Oh, that it might, like the steeds of the immortals, reach in four bounds the limits of its course!"

There is more than one way of seeing and of painting Nature, and I admit them all, provided they are truthful. But in reality it is such bits of landscape as these that I prefer. They are delicate; they are felt and "painted" at the same time; they are painted from near by, on the spot, according to Nature, but without crudeness. There is no trace of the palette. The colours have all their original freshness and truth, and also a certain tenderness. They have passed into the mirror of the inner man, and are seen by reflection. One finds in them, above all, expression, and they breathe the very soul of things.

"*(March) 28th.* — Every time that we allow ourselves to be penetrated by Nature, our soul is opened to the most touching impressions. Though Nature become pale, gray, cold, and rainy, in autumn and in winter, there is something in her which moves not only the surface of the soul, but even its inmost depths, and awakens a thousand memories, which to all ap-

pearance have no connection with the outward scene, but which doubtless hold communion with the soul of Nature through sympathies unknown to us. Lying in a grove of beeches, and breathing the warm air of spring, I experienced to-day this wonderful power. . . .

" *April 5th.* — A day as beautiful as one could wish ; some clouds, but only enough to make a landscape of the sky. More and more do they assume their summer forms. Their different groups hang beneath the sun, immovable, like flocks of sheep in the pastures during the great heat. I saw a swallow, and I heard the humming of the bees on the flowers. While seated in the sunshine so as to be penetrated to the very marrow by the divine spring, I experienced some of the impressions of my childhood ; for a moment I looked upon the sky with its clouds, the earth with its woods, its songs, its hummings, as I then did. This renewal of the first aspect of things, of the physiognomy which our first glances found in them, is, to me, one of the sweetest reactions of childhood upon the current of life."

But soon there came a struggle within him, and he experienced scruples. Guérin at this time is still, strictly speaking, a Christian. He

takes his soul to task for feeling with so much ardour the insinuating charm and the voluptuousness of Nature, on a day of divine contrition and mourning, — for this 5th of April was a Good Friday. The religious retreat in which he is confined during this Passion Week seems to him tedious; and he reproaches himself for it. Within him discipline combats revery. He, whose instinct is to go forth, to wander at will, to pursue the infinite in the zephyrs, in the murmurs of the winds and waters, in the odours of spring, and in the perfumes; he, who was to say, while planning his travels, "Wandering is full of charm; while wandering, we feel that we are carrying out the true condition of humanity; therein lies, I believe, the secret of the charm," — endeavours at this moment of his life to reconcile Christianity and the worship of Nature. He seeks, if it were possible, a mystic relation between the adoration of this Nature which centres in the heart of man and there sacrifices herself as on an altar, and the eucharistic immolation in this same heart. Vain effort! He attempts the impossible and the irreconcilable; he will succeed only in delaying the time, near at hand, when he will be irresistibly carried away. For there is no middle course: the Cross obstructs, more or less, the free view

of Nature; the great Pan has nothing to do with the Divine Crucified. The first condition which imposes itself upon the Christian thinker is a certain distrustful and timorous sobriety. But Guérin does not resist; all natural accidents as they pass, — an April shower, a March squall, a soft and capricious May breeze, — all speak to him, all lay hold upon him, take possession of him, and carry him away. It is useless for him to stop at short intervals and cry out, "Oh, my God, why should my rest be troubled by what passes in the air, and the peace of my soul be thus given over to the will of the winds?" He continues to give himself over to it, he abandons himself, he is intoxicated with the life of things, and at times would wish to be merged in it, to become universalized in it.

"*(April)* 25*th.* — It has just been raining. Nature is fresh and radiant; the earth seems to taste with rapture the water which brings it life. One would say that the throats of the birds had also been refreshed by this rain; their song is purer, more vivacious, more brilliant, and vibrates wonderfully in the air, which has become most sonorous and resounding. The nightingales, the bullfinches, the blackbirds, the thrushes, the golden orioles, the finches, the

wrens, — all these sing and rejoice. A goose, shrieking like a trumpet, adds by contrast to the charm. The motionless trees seem to listen to all these sounds. Innumerable apple-trees in full bloom look like balls of snow in the distance; the cherry-trees, all white as well, rise like pyramids or spread out like fans of flowers.

"The birds seem at times to aim at those orchestral effects where all the instruments are blended in a mass of harmony.

"Would that we could identify ourselves with spring; that we could go so far as to believe that in ourselves breathe all the life, and all the love that ferment in Nature; that we could feel ourselves to be, at the same time, verdure, bird, song, freshness, elasticity, rapture, serenity! What then should I become? There are moments when, by dint of concentrating ourselves upon this idea and gazing fixedly on Nature, we fancy that we experience something like this."

A month has passed. The moment when the spring, long brooded over and nourished, bursts forth, no longer in flowers, but in leaves; when the foliage runs riot; when two or three mornings bring forth an almost instantaneous inundation of verdure, — all this is admirably rendered:

"*(May) 3rd.* — Joyous day, full of sunshine, warm breeze, perfumes in the air, felicity in the soul. The verdure visibly increases; it has sprung from the garden to the thicket; it has gained possession of the whole length of the pond; it bounds, so to speak, from tree to tree, from thicket to thicket, in the fields and on the hillsides, and I can see that it has already reached the forest, and is beginning to spread over its broad back. Soon it will extend as far as the eye can reach; and all these broad expanses, bounded by the horizon, will sway and surge like a vast sea, — a sea of emerald. Yet a few more days, and we shall have all the pomp, all the display, of the vegetable kingdom."

And the moment when all that at first was only flowers without leaves now is nought but germ and foliage, when the loves of the plants have ceased, and when the nutrition of the fruits has begun: —

"*22nd.* — There are no more flowers on the trees. Their mission of love accomplished, they have died, like a mother who expires in giving birth. The fruits have set; they inhale that vital and reproductive energy which is to produce new individuals. An innumerable generation is at this moment hanging from the

branches of all the trees, from the fibres of the humblest grasses, like children on the maternal bosom. All these germs, incalculable in their number and diversity, are swinging in their cradle between heaven and earth, given over to the care of the winds, whose charge it is to rock these new-born creatures. Future forests sway unseen on living forests. All Nature is full of the cares of her immense maternity."

Although at heart devoted to Brittany, which he calls " the good country," the child of the South awakens at times in Guérin ; Mignon remembers the blue sky and the country where the olive-trees blossom. The guest of La Chênaie does not deceive himself as to this magnificence, these beauties of the woods and thickets, which are always so prone to become dry and crabbed again ; La Chênaie, all Brittany, " gives me the idea," he says, " of an old woman, all wrinkled and hoary, changed back by a fairy's wand into a young and most graceful girl of sixteen." But, beneath the graceful young girl, the old woman reappears on certain days. One morning in the very midst of June the fine season has disappeared, no one knows where ; the west wind has, like a shepherd of the waters, invaded the whole sky, driving before

him his innumerable flocks of clouds. Except for the foliage, it is winter, with this distressing contrast in addition ; and even when it is bright, the summer, on its very festal days, always has about it, he feels, "something sad, veiled, and limited. It is like a miser who on occasion lavishes his money ; there is something niggardly even in his magnificence. Long live our sky of Languedoc, so liberal in light, so blue, so broadly arched!" Thus exclaims, on those days, almost as an exile, he who dreams again of his soft nest of Cayla and of La Roche d'Onelle. It is on his excursions through the country, and when he crosses the moors, it is then indeed that he finds Nature barren and melancholy, in the garb of a pauper and a beggar ; but he does not on this account disdain her. He has written on this theme some very subtile verses, in which the ruggedness of the country is most truthfully rendered ; he understands this ruggedness so well, and comes so close to it, that he triumphs over it. Like that Cybele of the Homeric hymn who at first presented herself to some young girls seated by the roadside under the disguise of a barren old woman, and who then of a sudden is changed back into the fruitful and glorious goddess, — the Breton Nature ends by yielding up to Guérin all that she pos-

sesses. If for a moment he did not appreciate her, he quickly repents, and she forgives him. She ceases to appear barren in his eyes ; she again becomes as beautiful as she can be ; the very moor takes on life, and to him seems clothed, in its smallest happenings, with a nameless charm.

It is in verse that he says these last things, and for this reason I do not quote them ; for Guérin's verses, though natural, easy, and flowing, are unfinished. He habitually and from preference employs a metre that I know well, from having tried in my time to introduce it and make use of it, — the familiar Alexandrine, used conversationally, lending itself to all the windings of a friendly talk. "Your poetry sings too much," wrote he to his sister Eugénie, "it does not talk enough." He guards against the strophe, as breaking too easily into a gallop and carrying away its rider ; he no less guards against the Lamartinian stanza, as rocking too softly its dreamer and its gondolier. He believes that one can use to great advantage this Alexandrine metre, which, when well managed, is not so rigid as it appears to be, and is capable of many niceties, and even of charming carelessness. This whole theory appears to me just, and it is also my own. It is only in the application that

Guérin is at fault, as I also may have been; but he is more, far more so, than he ought to have been. Especially does he leave it too much to chance; and one can say of him what he says of one of his friends, that it flows from him "as water from a fountain." He has written detached verses that are very happy and very free; but his phrase drags, lengthens out, and becomes prosaically intricate. He does not know how to divide it, to regulate the metre, and, after a certain number of uneven, irregular verses. how to restore the full tone and mark the cadence. The name of Brizeux, the Breton poet, is naturally associated with that of Guérin, the Breton landscapist. Guérin must have read the *Marie* of Brizeux; but I do not see that he speaks of it. We must not exaggerate; this pretty Marie, in her first dress, was only a little country girl according to the Parisian ideal. It was not until later that Brizeux thought of becoming a Breton in earnest. In the poem by him that bears the title, *Les Bretons*, he has been successful in two or three broad and vigorous pictures; as a whole, it is wanting in interest, and is entirely devoid of charm. I do not speak of the various collections which followed, and which, with rare exceptions, are but the barren and more and more uneven productions of a sterile and

exhausted vein. Now, what Guérin possessed above all was exuberance, ease, charm, breadth, and power; the author of *Le Centaure* is of a different order from the discreet lover of *Marie.* But Brizeux in verse is an artist; and Guérin is not sufficiently so. Brizeux possesses the science of verse; and if he allow his stream to flow too slowly, if for good reasons he never lets it loose, if he never has what the generous poet Lucretius calls the *magnum immissis certamen habenis,* — the home-charge at full speed, — at least he always gathers in the folds at his girdle, and has dexterous and charming ways of fastening it.

In 1833, Guérin, that Breton by adoption, who at that time was far more of a Breton in genius and in soul than Brizeux, was living to the full that rural, restful, poetic, and Christian life whose vitality rose up in floods into his talent and flowed with freshness over his private pages. He had his troubles, his internal failings, I know; we will return to this weak side of his soul and his will, if only to point it out. Later, his talent will be more virile, and at the same time his conscience less troubled; here, he is in all the delicate flower of his adolescence. There was a unique moment when all harmonies were felt, when the different worships united and

mingled. Let one fancy to one's self — at La Chênaie, which was still called a religious house — Easter day of this year, 1833, the 7th of April, a radiant morning; and the touching things that happened during that morning for the last time. He who was still the Abbé de Lamennais was celebrating in the chapel the Easter Mass, — his last Mass, — and with his own hand was administering the communion to some young disciples who had remained faithful, and who believed him to be faithful also. They were Guérin, Élie de Kertanguy, and François du Breil de Marzan, a fervent young poet, overjoyed at bringing to the Holy Table a new recruit, a friend ten years his senior, — Hippolyte de La Morvonnais, himself a poet. At that time there were at La Chênaie, or there were to come, men whom to meet and to hold converse with was a source of pure joy, — the Abbé Gerbet, a spirit gentle and of tender amenity; the Abbé de Cazalès, an affectionate heart, and experienced in the inner life; other names, some of whom have since made their mark in various sciences, such as Eugène Boré, Frédéric de La Provostaye. It was a pious and learned group. Who would have then said, to those who were still gathered around the master, that he who had but now

administered to them the communion with his own hand would administer it again to no one; that he would himself refuse it forever; and that he was soon to have for a too real device *an oak broken by the storm*, with this proud motto: "*I break, but do not bend!*" a Titanic device in the spirit of Capanæus? "Ah, had this been said to us what a shudder would have passed through our veins!" wrote one of them. But for us who have to speak here only of literature, it is impossible not to touch upon such a memorable moment in the moral history of that time, not to associate it with the talent of Guérin, not to regret that the high and impetuous spirit that was already brewing tempests did not then do as did the obscure disciple hidden under his wing, — that he did not open his heart and his ear to some notes of the pastoral flute; that instead of letting loose his ideas upon society, and of seeing in it nothing but hell, dungeons, caves, sewers (images that are perpetually coming back to him and besetting him), he did not oftener look toward Nature, to be softened and calmed by it. And yet this same M. de Lamennais wrote, a few months later, to one of his pious friends in Italy: "You are about to enter upon spring, earlier in the country where you live than in France; I hope it will have a happy influence

on your health. Abandon yourself to all there is of sweetness in this season of rebirth ; make yourself a flower with the flowers. We lose through our own fault a part, and the greater part, of the blessings of the Creator ; He surrounds us with His gifts, and we refuse to enjoy them through I know not what melancholy wilfulness in tormenting ourselves. In the midst of the atmosphere of perfumes which emanates from Him, we make one for ourselves composed of all the mortal vapours which are exhaled from our cares, our anxieties, and our sorrows, — fatal diving-bell that isolates us in the heart of the immense ocean." And who, then, more than he had placed himself under this bell and delighted in staying there ?

I have still something to say on this sojourn of Guérin at La Chênaie and in Brittany, on this "receptive" period of his talent.

Since I have spoken of Lamennais at this date of 1833, and such as he still appeared in the eyes of this faithful circle, how can I fail to call attention to the portrait that Guérin has drawn of him in a letter of May 16th to M. de Bayne de Rayssac, one of his friends of the South ? It is indeed the most living, the most speaking picture of this half of Lamennais, one in which it is difficult to believe from merely reading him,

— the half of a soul which seemed while talking to open itself entirely, so gay and charming was it, but which was so soon eclipsed, when of a sudden his forehead became wrinkled and his face darkened. Guérin shows him to us as he saw him, in his best light and sometimes in his proud moments, but without any of his dark side. The letters of Guérin to his friends served to complete the impressions noted in his journal at this time; and some of the pages of this journal are themselves merely passages from his letters which appeared to him worthy of being transcribed before they took flight. He was, in fact, trying his hand, like the artist, the painter, who prepares his sketches at random. One of his most longed-for holidays, which he had promised himself as soon as he arrived in Brittany, was a little journey to the shores of the ocean. He had already once before, on the 28th of March, when taking a longer walk than usual with the Abbé Gerbet and another companion, caught a glimpse toward the north, from the top of some height, of the Bay of Cancale and the distant shining waters which formed on the horizon a line of light. But the real journey, which made him able to exclaim, "At last I have seen the ocean," did not take place until the 11th of April. On that day, the

Thursday after Easter, he started out on foot at one o'clock in the afternoon with fine weather and a fresh breeze, in the company of Edmond de Cazalès, who had not as yet taken orders. They had no less than six or seven leagues to walk ; but to be travelling toward a great goal, and to go by a long road in the company of a friend, is a double happiness. Guérin felt this, and tells us of it : " It is a supreme delight to journey toward the ocean with a travelling companion such as he. Our conversation kept up without intermission, so to speak, from La Chênaie to Saint-Malo ; and when we had completed our six leagues, I would still have liked to see before us a long line of road, for truly a friendly talk is one of those sweet things which one would always like to lengthen out." He gives us an idea of these talks, which embraced the world of the heart and that of Nature, and touched upon poetry, tender memories, hopes, and all the charming questions of youth. I fancy that these sweet discourses resembled in spirit what must have been the talks of Basil and of Gregory on the seaside near Athens, and those of Augustine and his friends along the shores of Ostia. The picturesque descriptions, the sea-views which follow, gain beauty from these lofty conversations, which form their firmament.

The last days which Guérin spent at La Chênaie were sweet, but of a sweetness often troubled ; he felt, in fact, that this life of seclusion was about to cease, and that the coming vacation would force him to take some decision. All the more, when his imagination allowed it, did he enjoy the deep and unruffled calm of these last hours.

On the 7th of September, at four o'clock in the afternoon, he went up to the room of M. Féli, and bade him farewell. After a stay of nine months, "the doors of the paradise of La Chênaie were closed behind him." The ambiguous and painful relations of M. de Lamennais with the diocesan authority had latterly grown worse ; and it became advisable for the little school to disperse. Still Guérin did not yet leave Brittany, but remained there until the end of January, 1834, either at La Brousse, in the family of M. de Marzan, or at Le Val de l'Arguenon, in the hermitage of his friend Hippolyte de La Morvonnais, or at Mordreux, with the latter's father-in-law. This proved to be a new and important period in his life. He had carried to La Chênaie a secret heart-ache ; I do not say a passion, but a sentiment. This sentiment would be awakened at the sight of certain beech-trees which he saw from his

window, in the direction of the pond, and which recalled dear and agitating memories. There were nights when he dreamed ; let us listen to one of his dreams : —

"*(June)* 15*th.* — *Strange dream !* I dreamed that I was alone in a vast cathedral. I was there under the impression of the presence of God, and in that condition of the soul when one is conscious of nothing but of God and one's self, when a voice arose, — a voice infinitely sweet, a woman's voice, and yet it filled the whole church like a great choir. I recognized it at once ; it was the voice of Louise, *silver-sweet sounding.*"

Such dreams as these, which recall those of the youthful Dante and of the *Vita Nuova* belonged only to the more exalted portion of his mind, and there were means of curing him of them. And, to say here all that we think, Guérin was not made for the great and violent passions of love. One day, some years later, while reading the Letters of Mlle. de Lespinasse, and discovering in them flames of passion to him unknown, he was moved, and was astonished at being thus moved : "Truly," said he, "I did not know that I had so sensitive an imagina-

tion, and one that could so agitate my heart. Have I not taken the measure of my heart? It is not made for those passions where one says, *to love you, to see you, or to live no more!*" No circumstance of his life, not even the inclination that determined his marriage, contradicts this judgment that he passed on himself. He never loved excepting on the surface, and, so to speak, in front of the first curtain of his soul; the depths were shrouded in mystery and reserve. I believe that he, the lover of Nature, felt too deeply the universality of things to love one being above all else. However that may be, he had at that time a secret sorrow; and on leaving the solitary Chênaie, and finding himself transported into the loving intimacy of Hippolyte de La Morvonnais and his young wife, this sorrow was cured. He was one of those who are soothed instead of excited by the sympathetic friendship of a young woman. The pure friendship of the chaste wife and the happiness of which he was a witness, without effacing or doing away with the other image, changed it into a light shadow. Everything resumed its natural order; and Guérin, on the eve of finding himself thrust into the thick of the world's conflict, tasted a few months of perfect harmony.

The pictures that he has drawn of these autumn and winter days, passed on the borders of the ocean in that hospitable home, — in that *Thébaïde des Grèves,* as La Morvonnais rather ambitiously called it, — are beautiful pages which naturally take their place by the side of the best of their kind that we know. The striking contrast between the peace of the fireside and the almost continual tempests of the ocean, and at times that other contrast no less striking between the peaceful sea, the slumber of the fields, and the stormy heart of the looker-on, give to the different pictures all their life and variety : —

"And see how full of goodness is Providence toward me! Fearing lest the sudden change from the soft and temperate atmosphere of a religious and solitary life to the torrid zone of the world should prove too great a trial for my soul, it has led me, on leaving that sacred refuge, to a house placed upon the borders of these two regions, where, without being in solitude, one is yet not in the world, — a house whose windows open on one side upon the plain where stirs the tumult of men, and on the other side upon the wilderness where sing the servants of God; on one side upon the ocean, and on the

other side upon the forests. And this metaphor is a reality, for this house is built upon the borders of the sea. I wish to put on record here an account of my sojourn in this place, for the days spent here are full of happiness, and I know that in the future I shall often turn back to read again of these joys of the past.

"A pious man and a poet; a woman whose heart beats so in unison with his that they seem like parts of but one soul; a child whose name is Marie, like her mother, the first rays of whose love and intelligence shine like a star through the white veil of childhood; a simple life in an old-fashioned house; the ocean which, morning and evening, brings us its harmonies; finally, a pilgrim who descends from Mount Carmel on his way to Babylon, and who has left at the door his staff and his sandals, to take a seat at the hospitable board, — here is material for a Biblical poem, could I describe things as well as I can feel them."

I do not regret this Biblical poem; he gives us enough of it even while telling us that he cannot write it. We shall presently have its most beautiful page; but first let us gaze with him upon the spectacle of an "agitated sea" and at the same time of the human soul which contemplates it.

"Yesterday a west wind blew furiously. I saw the ocean troubled, but this tumult, however sublime it may be, is far from equalling, in my eyes, the sight of the sea blue and serene. But why assert that one is not equal to the other? Who could measure these two sublimities and say, 'The second is greater than the first'? Let us merely say, 'My soul takes more delight in serenity than in storm!' Yesterday there was a great battle on the watery plains. The leaping waves seemed like the countless Tartar cavalry galloping ceaselessly over the plains of Asia. The entrance to the bay is defended, as it were, by a chain of granite isles. It was a sight to watch the billows rushing to the assault and with frightful outcries throwing themselves madly against these masses of rock; it was a sight to watch them take their start and try who should best clear the black reef-heads. The most daring or the nimblest leaped onto the other side with a great cry; the others, heavier or more awkward, shattered themselves against the rock, tossing up foam of dazzling whiteness, and then retreated with dull and deep growlings, like house-dogs thrust back by the traveller's staff. From the top of a cliff where we could with difficulty keep our footing against the fury of the wind, we witnessed these strange struggles. There we

were, our bodies bent, our legs spread apart to broaden our base and give us greater power of resistance, and both hands clutching our hats to keep them on our heads. The immeasurable tumult of the sea, the noisy rushing of the waves, the no less rapid but silent passing of the clouds, the sea-birds that floated in the sky, balancing their slender bodies between two arched wings of redundant spread, — all this mass of wild and sonorous harmonies converged toward the souls of two beings, five feet high, planted on the crest of a cliff, shaken like leaves by the force of the wind, and in this immensity hardly more conspicuous than two birds perched upon a clod of earth. Oh, how strange and beautiful is one of these moments when sublime agitation and deep revery meet together, when the soul and Nature rise to their whole height face to face!

"A few steps from us there was a group of children shielded by a rock and watching their flocks scattered over the steep sides of the cliffs.

"Throw upon this ocean-scene a vessel in peril, and all is changed; nothing is seen but the vessel. Happy is he who can contemplate Nature solitary and deserted! Happy, he who can watch her giving herself over to her terrible sports without danger to any living being!

Happy, he who can see from the top of a mountain a lion bounding and roaring on the plain below, while neither traveller nor gazelle is passing by! Hippolyte, yesterday we had this joy; we should thank Heaven for it."

Have the English fireside poets, Cowper and Wordsworth, ever rendered the joys of a pure home-life, of domestic felicity, that reminiscence of Eden, more delightfully than the traveller who, sitting for a moment beneath a roof thus blessed, has said: —

"Never have I tasted so intimately and so deeply the joys of family life. Never has that perfume which encircles a pious and happy household enveloped me so completely. It is like a cloud of invisible incense which I breathe unceasingly. All these minute details of family life, which as a whole make up the day, are to me so many gradations of a continuous charm, that gradually unfolds itself from one end of the day to the other. The morning salutation, which renews in a way the pleasure of the first arrival, for the words of greeting are almost the same, and then the nightly parting is a semblance of longer separations, being, like them, full of danger and uncertainty; the breakfast, a repast

by which we celebrate the joy of coming together again ; the walk which then follows, a sort of salutation and adoration which we render to Nature ; our return home and withdrawal into an old wainscoted room, looking on the sea, and beyond the reach of household noises, in a word, a true sanctuary of work ; the dinner announced, not by the sound of a bell, which recalls too vividly the school or a large establishment, but by a gentle voice ; the mirth, the lively pleasantries, the flowing talk, gliding on unceasingly throughout the repast ; the crackling fire of dry branches around which we draw our chairs immediately after ; the pleasant things said by the warmth of the flames which roar while we talk ; and, if the sun be shining, the walk on the borders of the ocean, which sees approaching it a mother, her child in her arms, the father of this child, and a stranger, these last two with stick in hand ; the rosy lips of the little girl, who talks to the sound of the waves, and sometimes the tears she sheds and her cries of childish grief by the borders of the sea ; our own thoughts as we watch the mother and child smiling upon each other, or the child weeping and the mother seeking to soothe her with the sweetness of her caresses and her voice ; the ocean ever rolling in its train of billows and of sounds ;

the dead branches we cut while walking to and fro in the copse, with which to light a quick, bright fire on our return; this little touch of wood-cutter's work which brings us nearer to Nature and recalls the singular passion which M. Féli had for the same work; the hours of study and of poetic effusion which bring us to the supper hour; this repast to which we are called by the same gentle voice as at noon, and which is passed amid the same though less brilliant joys, for the evening softens all things, tempers all things; then the evening, which opens with the bright light of a gladsome fire, and from reading to reading, from talk to talk, expires at last in sleep, — to all the charms of such a day add I know not what angelic radiance, what magic spell of peace, of freshness, and of innocence, which emanates from the blond head, the blue eyes, the silvery voice, the laughter, the little airs full of intelligence, of a child who, I feel sure, excites the envy of more than one angel, who delights you, fascinates you, who by the slightest movement of her lips awakens in you the most passionate fondness, so great is the power of weakness; finally, to all this add the dreams of the imagination, and you will still fall far short of realizing the fulness of all these family joys."

Still, these family joys, too keenly felt by a heart to whom it was not given to taste them personally, affected him too deeply; he tells us that he had reached the point of weeping at nothing, "as it is with little children, or old men." This continuous calm, this sweet monotony of family life, prolonging itself like a note soft but always the same, had ended by enervating him, by over-exciting him and throwing him outside of himself, or by plunging him too deeply within himself. This excess of peace was to him a new kind of storm; his soul had become "a captive," and there was danger on this side of his nature of I know not what intoxication of languor, had he not found a counterpoise, a powerful diversion in the contemplation of Nature, even as at other moments there had been danger lest the sovereign attraction, the powerful voice of this Nature, would alone absorb and govern him. For Guérin had a marvellous soul, most sensitive and impressionable, but without guarantee against itself, and without defence. This once, however, he was able to turn away in time and to alternate the forms of his susceptibility: —

"I began to observe her [Nature] still more attentively than usual, and by degrees the tumult within me subsided; for out of the fields,

the waters, and the woods came a sweet and beneficent virtue which penetrated me and changed all my transports into melancholy dreams. This mingling of the calm impressions of Nature with the stormy reveries of the heart produced a state of the soul which I would long wish to retain, for it well befits a restless dreamer like myself. It is like a temperate and tranquil ecstasy which transports the soul outside of itself without depriving it of the consciousness of a permanent and somewhat tumultuous sadness. The soul also becomes insensibly filled with a languor which deadens all the activity of the intellectual faculties, and lulls it into a half-sleep, void of all thought, in which it still feels the power to dream of the most beautiful things. . . . Nothing can more faithfully represent this state of the soul than the shades of evening falling at this very moment. Gray clouds just edged with silver cover the whole face of the sky. The sun, which set but a few moments ago, has left behind light enough to temper for a while the black shadows, and to soften in a measure the fall of night. The winds are hushed, and the peaceful ocean, as I come to listen on the threshold of the door, sends me only a melodious murmur which softly spreads over the soul like a beautiful wave over the beach. The

birds, the first to feel the influence of the night, fly toward the woods, and their wings rustle in the clouds. The coppice, which covers the entire slope of the hill of Le Val, and resounds all day long with the chirp of the wren, the gay whistle of the wood-pecker, and the various notes of a multitude of birds, has no more a sound along its paths or within its thickets, unless it be the shrill call of the blackbirds as they play together and chase one another, after the other birds have hidden their heads under their wings. The noise of men, always the last to become silent, gradually dies away over the face of the fields. The general uproar ceases, and not a sound is heard except from the towns and hamlets, where, far into the night, the children cry, and the dogs bark. Silence inwraps me ; all things yearn for rest except my pen, which disturbs, perchance, the slumber of some living atom asleep in the folds of my notebook, for it makes its little sound as it writes these idle thoughts. Then let it cease ; for what I write, have written, and shall write, will never be worth the sleep of a single atom."

Truly, this is as beautiful as a beautiful poem. We speak of the "Lakists" and their poetry ; and La Morvonnais at this very time was so

prepossessed with it that he went so far as to visit Wordsworth at his residence at Rydal Mount, near the Westmoreland lakes, and to remain in correspondence with this great and tranquil spirit, this patriarch of the lyric muse. Guérin, without thinking so much about it, more nearly resembled the Lake-poets, while not attempting in the least to imitate them : they have not produced a purer pastoral sonnet, there is not in the poetic rambles of Cowper a more transparent picture than the page just quoted, so true in its delineation and at the same time so tender, so distinct, and so moving. The humble sentiment at the close, which takes account of the smallest living atom, is enough to excite the envy of a gentle poet of India.

But Guérin had to tear himself away from this solitude, where he was about to forget himself, and, if he did not take heed, to find too great delight in the taste of the "lotus" fruit. During a last walk, on a smiling winter afternoon, along those cliffs, through that path which so many times had led him among the box-trees and hazel-bushes, he breathes out his farewells and carries away all that he can of the soul of things. On the morrow he is at Caen ; a few days later, at Paris. His timid nature, as trembling and fearful as that of a frightened deer, experiences

on arriving there a secret horror. He distrusts himself; he fears men.

"*Paris, Feb.* 1, 1834. — My God, close my eyes; keep me from seeing all this multitude, the sight of which stirs up within me such bitter, such discouraging thoughts! Grant that, as I pass through it, I may be deaf to the noise, insensible to those impressions which crush me as I move among the crowd; and, for this, place before my eyes an image, a vision of things I love, a field, a valley, a moor, Cayla, Le Val, some object of Nature! I will walk with my gaze fixed upon these sweet forms, and shall thus pass on undisturbed."

Here we must enter a little into the secret of Guérin's nature. He had within him a genuine contradiction. Through one side he felt external nature passionately, to distraction; he was capable of plunging into it with fearlessness, with magnificent frenzy, of realizing by his imagination the fabulous existence of the ancient demi-gods. Through quite a different side, he withdrew within himself, analyzed, humbled, and belittled himself at pleasure; he effaced himself with disheartening humility; he was one of those souls born Christian, so to speak, who

have need of accusing themselves, of repenting, of finding outside of themselves a love full of pity and "compassion," who have gone early to confession, and will always need to confess. I have known souls of this kind ; and I once happened to describe one in a romance which this secret affinity made Guérin receive with indulgence. He also was of the race of René, but only partly so, to this extent, that he did not believe himself to be of a superior nature ; very far from that, he believed that he felt himself to be poor, infirm, "pitiable," and, even on his best days, of a nature "apart rather than superior."

"To be loved as I am," he murmured to himself, "I should need to meet a soul willing to stoop to its inferior, a strong soul which would bow the knee before the weaker, not to adore it, but to serve, console, and watch over it as one would over the sick, — in fine, a soul endowed with a sensibility humble as well as profound, which should so far divest itself of that pride, so natural even to love, as to bury its heart in an obscure affection of which the world would understand nothing ; to consecrate itself to a feeble, languishing, and wholly introspective being ; to be willing to concentrate all its rays

upon a flower without splendor, frail and trembling, which would indeed yield it those perfumes whose sweetness charms and penetrates, but never those which intoxicate and exalt to the blissful folly of ecstasy."

His friends struggled as much as was in their power against this disheartened disposition, whose paroxysms and internal ebb and flow he disclosed to them at times with exquisite delicacy and with appalling lucidity ; they urged him, at this entrance into practical life, to form for himself a plan of studies, to have a connected purpose, to apply and concentrate his intellectual powers according to some method and on definite subjects. They hoped at one time to obtain for him a chair of comparative literature which it was proposed to establish at the Collége de Juilly, then under the direction of M. de Scorbiac and M. de Salinis; but this idea was not carried out, and Guérin had to content himself with a temporary class at the Collége Stanislas, and with a few lessons which he gave here and there. A cordial Breton friend, who was in Paris (M. Paul Quemper), had taken it upon himself to smooth away his first difficulties ; and in this he succeeded. Having conceded this much to material necessities, Guérin took refuge

all the more during his leisure hours in the life of the heart and the fancy ; he revelled in his own nature. Withdrawn as if in his "burrow," into a small garden of the Rue d'Anjou, near the Rue de la Pépinière, he carried himself back in thought to the sublime and charming sights which he had brought away with him from the land of the West. In his weariness he embraced the trunk of his lilac-tree "as the sole being in this world upon whom he could lean his faltering nature, as the only one capable of enduring his embrace." But soon the air of that Paris, through which he had to pass every day, worked upon this disconsolate spirit of twenty-four. The attraction of the world grew upon him little by little ; new friendships were formed which, without obliterating the old ones, threw them unconsciously into the background. Any one who met him two years later, worldly, elegant, "fashionable" even, a conversationalist who could hold his own with the most brilliant talkers, never would have said on seeing him that it was "in spite of himself" that he was this man of action. There is nothing equal to these reformed cowards as soon as they feel the spur. And at the same time this talent, which he always persisted in doubting, was being developed, was becoming emboldened ; he finally applied it to original

compositions, to actual creations; the artist properly so called was manifesting himself within him.

And here may the piety of a sister who has presided over this monument erected to a tender genius allow us to make a reflection. In the just tribute which is paid to the memory of the beloved dead, nothing unjust toward the living should creep in; and omission may be an injustice. The three or four years that Guérin spent in Paris, where he lived that life of privations and struggles, of study and of the world, of varied relationships, are in no wise years to be despised or concealed. This life is one that many among us have known, and still live. He lost, doubtless, on one side; he gained on the other. He was in part faithless to the freshness of his youthful impressions; but, like all the faithless ones who are not led too far astray, he only blossomed forth the better. Talent is a stem which willingly implants itself in virtue, but which also often shoots beyond and leaves it behind. It is even rare that at its most brilliant moment it belongs wholly to virtue; it is only to the breath of passion that it gives out all its perfumes.

Retaining all his refinement of heart, all his impressions of rural nature and of the country, which from time to time he renewed by rapid

journeys, Guérin, divided, from this time on, between two worships, — "the god of the city and that of the wilderness," — was in the best way prepared to enter the field of art, to plan and to venture upon a work. He continued, it is true, to write in his journal that he did not believe himself talented; he tried his best to demonstrate it to himself in subtile and charming pages, which went to prove this very talent. But when he ventured to say these things to his friends, men of intellect, professional men, men of enthusiasm and of brilliant wit, to D'Aurevilly, Scudo, Amédée Renée,[1] and some others, he was pitilessly laughed at and chided, and what was better still, his distrust of himself was removed. He unwittingly borrowed from them some of their energy and self-reliance. And thus it was that one day he entered upon his full powers. The idea of *Le Centaure* came to him after several visits he had made with M. Trebutien to the *Musée des Antiques*. He was then reading Pausanias, and was astonished at the multitude of objects described by the

[1] In a collection of verse published by M. Amédée Renée in 1841, under the title of *Heures de Poésie*, there is a beautiful piece written "à la Mémoire de Maurice de Guérin." In it his poetical nature is well characterized; he is called *malade d'infini*.

Greek antiquarian: "Greece," said he, "was like a great museum." We are here shown the two orders, the two trains of ideas which met and were joined together in him in fruitful alliance.

Le Centaure is in no wise an imitation of Ballanche; it is an original conception, and peculiar to Guérin. We have seen how he loved to diffuse and almost to ramify himself through Nature; he was, at moments, like those wandering plants whose roots float upon the surface of the water, at the pleasure of the waves. He has spoken many times of this drifting, roving sensation; there were days when, in his love of peace, he envied "the strong and silent life that reigns beneath the bark of the oaks." He dreamed of I know not what metamorphosis into a tree; but this old man's destiny, this end worthy of Philemon and of Baucis, and at most suited to the wisdom of a Laprade, clashed with the ardent, impetuous life of a young heart. So Guérin had up to that time sought for his form of expression, but had not found it; all at once it was revealed to him, personified under the type of the Centaur. Those great primitive organizations in which Lucretius did not believe, and in which Guérin makes us almost believe, — where the genius of man was united to the still uncon-

quered force of the animal, and formed one with it; by which Nature, scarcely risen from the watery deep, was overrun, taken possession of, or at least enkindled in their lawless and unceasing coursing to and fro, — seemed to him worthy of a sculptor, and of a listener capable of repeating its mystery. He imagined the last of the Centaurs on the summit of a mountain, at the entrance to his cave, being questioned, and relating in his melancholy old age the pleasures of his youthful days to a curious mortal, to this diminutive Centaur called man; for man, regarding him in this fabulous and grandiose perspective, would be but a debased Centaur made to stand upright. Nothing can equal in power this dream of a few pages; nothing can be compared to it in finish and classical execution.

Guérin dreamed of doing more; this was but a beginning. He also created a *Bacchante* which never has been found, a preliminary fragment of some unknown prose poem, the title of which was to be *Bacchus dans l'Inde;* he was meditating a *Hermaphrodite.* The *Galérie des Antiques* thus offered him the moulds wherein henceforth he would pour all his sensations gathered from the moors and the strands, and shape them in forms tender or severe. His

talent was entering upon its first phase. But the artist in presence of his ideal temple was able to make only the statue on its threshold; he was to fall as he took his first steps. Happy in his recent marriage with a young and pretty creole, sure henceforth of a home and of leisure, he was attacked by a real malady which explained only too well the cause of his habitual weaknesses. That persistent lament of so rich a nature was then understood: the germs of extinction and of early death which were planted at the very centre of his physical organization, at the very roots of life, had often betrayed themselves in his moral states by that inexpressible feeling of discouragement and weakness. This noble youth, carried, dying, to the south of France, passed away during the summer of 1839, at the moment when he once more beheld his native sky, and where he felt anew all the freshness of early love and piety. The guardian angels of his family watched and prayed by his bedside and brought consolation to his last moments. He was but twenty-nine years old. The two volumes which are to-day given to the world will make him live; and, as a just compensation for a future so cruelly cut short, that which was dispersed here and there, that which was written and noted down for himself

alone, which he did not have time to fashion and transform by the rules of art, becomes his brightest crown, — one which, if I mistake not, will never fade.

SAINTE-BEUVE,
of the *Académie Française.*

NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR. — In many cases, the quotations made by Sainte-Beuve from the *Journal* of Maurice de Guérin differ from the text of the *Journal* as published by M. Trebutien. The following are all the variations in Sainte-Beuve's citations, with the exception of a few words scattered here and there, such as : *les furies du vent*, instead of *les secousses du vent; qui n'étaient guère plus apparents*, instead of *pas plus apparents ; pour aller*, instead of *pour se rendre ; le bonheur*, instead of *les félicités*, — *etc.*

Page 9, line 24, under March 3, *radieux* is added by Sainte-Beuve after *Le soleil s'est montré.*

Page 14, line 23, under March 28, the following words are omitted : *soit qu'elle rie et se pare dans les beaux jours.* These omitted words are necessary to the sense of what follows.

Page 33, line 18, *et solitaire* are added after *religieuse.*

Pages 33, 34, the following words are added : *d'un côté sur l'Océan, et de l'autre sur les bois ; et cette figure est une réalité, car elle est bâtie sur le bord de la mer.*

Page 34, line 5, *ici* is used instead of *sous ce toit.*

Pages 35, 36, four lines are added between *les furies du vent* and *Le tumulte immense de la mer.*

Pages 36, 37, fourteen lines are added, beginning with the paragraph, *À quelques pas de nous*, and ending the quotation.

JOURNAL

OF

MAURICE DE GUÉRIN.

JOURNAL.

(July, 1832—October, 1835.)

Cayla, July 10, 1832.

IT is now almost three months and a half that I have been in the country, under the parental roof, *at home* (delicious English expression which sums up all the *chez soi*), in the centre of an horizon dear to me. I have seen the springtime,— the spring, exuberant, unfettered, free from all restraint, scattering flowers and verdure with wayward fancy, racing like a playful child over our hills and dales, unfolding sublime conceptions and graceful fancies, merging similarities, harmonizing contrasts, after the manner of great artists, or rather as a type for them. I have reclined in the depths of the woods, by the side of the brooks, on the brow of the hills; again have I trodden all those paths where as a child my rapid footsteps flitted with all the carelessness of youth. To-day I have trodden them with a firmer step; I have lingered upon the traces of

my early footprints ; I have started anew on my pilgrimage, with thoughtfulness and devotion, — with the thoughtfulness inspired by old memories, and with the devotion aroused in the soul by its first impressions of nature.

30th. — There are books which never should be read again. I have chosen *René* to re-read on one of the most disenchanted days of my life, when my heart seems dead within me, — a day of days most profitless and waste, — to test the whole power of this book upon the soul ; and I have found that its power is great. This reading has refreshed my spirit like a torrential rain.

I find a limitless charm in returning to my early readings, — those passionate readings from sixteen to nineteen. I love to draw tears from the almost exhausted springs of my youth.

August 4th. — To-day I complete my twenty-second year. Often have I seen in Paris little children carried to their rest in their tiny coffins, thus passing through the great crowd. Ah, would that I had passed through the world as they did, buried in the innocence of my coffin and in the oblivion of the life of a day ! Those little angels know nothing of earth ; they are born in heaven. My father has told me that in my childhood he often saw my soul hovering on my lips ready to take wing. God and parental

love called it back to the trials of life. Gratitude and love to both! But I cannot help regretting that heaven where I might have been, and which now I can reach only by the devious path of human experience.

13*th*. — I am weak, strangely weak! How many times, even since grace has led me, have I not fallen like a child without leading-strings! My soul is feeble beyond all that can be imagined. It is the consciousness of my weakness that makes me seek shelter, and gives me the strength to break away from the world so as more surely to be with God. Two days in the great world, in Paris, would bring to nought all my resolutions! I must then hide them, bury them, screen them in the shadow of seclusion. Among all the places of refuge open to souls in need of escape, none is better suited to me than the house of M. de Lamennais, the abode of learning and piety.

When I reflect upon it, I blush at my own life, which I have so misused. I have sullied my humanity. Happily there were two sides to my soul; only halfway did I plunge into wrong. While one part of me grovelled on the earth, the other part, above all stain, high and serene, gathered in, drop by drop, that poetry which, if God gives me the time, will one day flow forth.

For me everything centres there. To poetry I owe everything, since there is no other word to express my thoughts as a whole ; I owe to it all that is pure and high and strong still remaining in my soul ; I owe to it all consolation that has ever come to me ; I shall perhaps owe to it my future.

I feel that my friendship for L—— is strong to-day, after having passed through the extravagances of college life and the frenzy of our first entrance into the world. It is becoming as serious as time, and as sweet as a fruit at its maturity.

LA CHÊNAIE, February 6th, 1833.

I have finished reading the first volume of Goethe's *Memoirs*. This book has left varying impressions on my mind. My imagination is deeply moved by Marguerite, by Lucinda, by Frédérica. Klopstock, Herder, Wieland, Gellert, Gleim, Bürger, — that burst of German poetry which rises, so beautiful and so national, toward the middle of the eighteenth century, all that fermentation of thought in German minds, is deeply interesting, especially in view of the present period, so fruitful and so glorious for Germany. But a bitter thought arises while following the details of the education of the

young men and the march of their intellectual development, as it is understood in that country; and this bitterness comes from a comparison with French education. Ten years of my life I wasted in college, and, on leaving, carried away with me, besides a few scraps of Latin and Greek, an immense mass of ennui. Such is nearly the result of all college education in France. They place the authors of antiquity in the hands of the youth; that is all very well. But do they teach them to understand, to appreciate antiquity? Have they ever unfolded to them the relation which these magnificent literatures bear to Nature, to religious dogmas, to philosophic systems, to the fine arts, to the civilization of ancient peoples? Have they ever guided their intellects link by link along that beautiful chain which binds together all the parts of a people's civilization, and forms it into a magnificent whole, where all the details connect and mutually reflect and explain one another? What professor, in reading to his pupils Homer or Virgil, has explained the poetry of the *Iliad* or the *Æneid* by the poetry of Nature under the sky of Greece or of Italy? Who has dreamed of illustrating poets by philosophers, philosophers by poets, these by artists, Plato by Homer, Homer by Pheidias? They

isolate these great geniuses; they disjoint a literature and then fling to you its scattered members, without taking the trouble to tell you what place they filled, what relations they held in the great organization from which they were detached. Children have a special fondness for cutting out pictures which chance to fall into their hands. They separate the figures from one another with great skill; their scissors follow every outline with the utmost precision, and the group thus divided is distributed among the little circle, because each one wants a picture. The work of our professors is not far different from that of the children; and an author thus separated from his surroundings is just as difficult to understand as is the figure cut out by the children and detached from the general composition and from the lights and shadows of the picture. After this, is it surprising that studies should be so empty, so insufficient? What could remain other than disgust and wellnigh hatred of study, after having been long and relentlessly chained to the letter, — a letter dead, and almost devoid of sense? In Germany, on the contrary, a broad philosophy presides over literary studies, and sheds over the early work of youth a fragrant unction which cherishes and develops the love of science.

Well, take heart! I am so used to farewells, to separations! Ah, but this one is too hard! No, it is not too hard, for there is no trial, however great, which does not develop in the soul an equal power of endurance. I shall suffer, but I shall keep my word.

March 3rd.—I began to write in this notebook on the 10th of July, 1832, and have returned to it only at long intervals. These eight months have been passed in the most cruel sufferings of the soul. I have written little because my powers were almost crushed. Had my trials left a little liberty to my intellect, I should have made some very curious observations on moral suffering; but I was stunned by sorrow. I think that the spring will do me great good. As the sun rises higher in his course and sheds his vital heat over all Nature, the grasp of sorrow loses some of its force. I feel its bonds loosening, and my soul, so long compressed and almost stifled, is gradually expanding and unfolding itself to breathe.

This day has enchanted me. For the first time in many days the sun has shown himself in all his beauty. He has opened the buds of leaves and flowers, and has awakened in my breast a thousand sweet thoughts.

Again the clouds take on their light and graceful forms, and outline charming fancies against

the azure of the sky. The woods have not yet put forth their leaves, but they have assumed such a gay and lively air that it gives them quite a new aspect. Everything is preparing for the great holiday of Nature.

4th. — I see some workmen who are digging in the garden. These poor people wear themselves out in this way all through their lives, just to earn enough to buy their daily bread, — their bread so dry and black. What a mystery is that of all these rude and lowly lives! and they form almost the whole of the human race. The day will come when all these drudges of the world will stretch out toward it their black and callous hands, cracked by the handles of their tools, and will say, "Lord, you who have said, 'Blessed are the poor and lowly,' behold us!"

To You, good God, we make our last appeal.

6th. — Élie[1] and I have had a long talk. Always full of enthusiasm for travel, we made a pilgrimage to America. We ascended the great rivers, sailed across the lakes, and roved among the forests in the footprints of Natty Bumpo and Cooper's other heroes, — delightful reminiscences. We returned to Europe, — prodigious fermentation of society. How infinite are the thoughts which pass through the human mind,

[1] Élie de Kertanguy died in 1846.

through all minds, from the highest angelic powers down to ourselves, and perhaps below us . . . who knows? What an ocean of thought pulsates before God. What is a single human mind separated from this immensity, or even this immensity itself before the eternal thought, God? Nothingness! There is a man who has pondered over all these things, who has lowered his genius into depths of humility, and whose soul is so strong that he writes, not for the glory of the world, but for the good of the world, without shrinking and without yielding. In him we see the mysterious struggles of genius; to him was given a mission, a martyrdom. God has, in a way, revealed to him the lowest depths of society and all the secrets of the troubles which devour it. He saw all this, but for some time he did not know how to reach diseased society, and was a prey to great sadness, to a kind of agony. At last he found what he sought for, and joy returned to him. He fulfilled his great mission. Oh, whoever could realize the fierce contest in his soul, could not sufficiently admire such devotion, for the internal powers of this man are ceaselessly struggling with thoughts which would crush powers other than his own; but he has received the apostleship and he announces the good tidings, like Saint

Paul: "For, though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor. ix. 16.)

From all this we drew the conclusion, that there is a necessity, an indispensable law, weighing upon each one of us, to fulfil our social mission, however narrow, however imperceptible it may be. We all owe to the general good, not only the sacrifice of our passions, but the sacrifice of our innocent tastes, of our plans for individual happiness, if this happiness is to be idle and useless to our fellow-men. We glanced at that sweet and peaceful existence which lies hidden in the bosom of the family; but it was a glance of sacrifice, resolved as we are to choose our place where we can do the greatest good.

This talk has strengthened my weak and faltering powers. My heart is filled with unknown sweetness, and my soul revives within me, like a patient, who, after having drank a beneficial draught, settles down in bed with a sense of satisfaction, which is in reality only an expression of hope.

8th. — A day of snow. A southeasterly wind whirls it into eddies, into great columns of dazzling whiteness. It melts as it falls. Here we are, carried back into the very heart of winter,

after a few smiles of spring. The wind is quite cold; the little singing-birds, so newly come, shiver with the cold, as do the flowers. The cracks in the partitions and in the windows wail as in January, and I, in my sorry covering, shrink as Nature does.

9th. — More snow, showers, gusts of wind, cold. Poor Brittany, thou indeed hast need of a little verdure to gladden thy sombre countenance. Oh, throw off quickly thy winter cloak and don for me thy spring mantle woven of leaves and flowers! When shall I see the folds of thy robe floating at the will of the winds?

I have been reading Homer, and the exploits of the Norman heroes in Italy and in Sicily. Achilles, Diomedes, Ulysses, Robert Guiscard, Roger, have met and have greeted one another.

10*th.* — "This, indeed, is the only honour we pay to woful mortals, — to cut the hair, and to pour down the tear from the cheeks" (Odyssey iv. 197).

11*th.* — It has snowed all night. When I arose, I had a glimpse, through my badly closed shutters, of that great white sheet which had silently spread itself over the fields. The black tree-trunks rise like columns of ebony from an ivory court; this hard and sharp contrast

and the dismal aspect of the woods are peculiarly saddening. Nothing is to be heard, — not a living thing except a few sparrows which, twittering as they fly, seek refuge among the fir-trees that stretch out their long arms laden with snow. The centre of these dense trees is impenetrable to frost; it is a shelter prepared by Providence, and full well the little birds know it.

I have taken a look at our primroses; each one bore its little burden of snow with head bent under the weight. These pretty flowers, so rich in colouring, produced a charming effect under their white hoods. I saw whole clusters covered with a single mass of snow; all these laughing flowers, thus veiled and bending over one another, looked like a group of young girls surprised by a shower and taking refuge under a white apron.

I was expecting a letter to-night; I did not receive one, but a friend arrived. It would be most interesting to notice whether in the smallest sorrows of life Providence did not prepare for us compensations which our ill-humour and our injustice prevent us from appreciating.

12*th*. — "I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die" (1 Sam. xiv. 43).

15*th.* — We live too little within ourselves; we scarcely live there at all. What has become of that inner eye which God has given us to watch constantly over our soul, to be the witness of the mysterious play of thought, of the ineffable movement of life in the tabernacle of humanity? It is closed, it sleeps; and we open wide our earthly eyes, but we understand nothing of Nature, because we do not use that sense which would reveal it to us, reflected in the divine mirror of the soul. There is no contact between Nature and ourselves; we have an understanding only of its external forms, and not of its meaning, its inward language, its beauty in so far as it is eternal and partakes of God, — all of which might be clearly pictured and mirrored in the soul, endowed as it is with a marvellous power of reflection. Oh, this contact of Nature and the soul would produce ineffable rapture, a wonderful love of heaven and of God!

To descend into the human soul and to cause Nature to descend into this soul.

16*th.* — I have been reading in *L'Europe Littéraire* some remarkable thoughts. It is there said that the intellectual zones are becoming more and more obliterated; that the great intellects scattered over the globe are beginning to

understand one another; that everything is tending toward a vast republic of human thought; and further on, that the ancients had a genuine appreciation of the general features of the human soul and of Nature; that out of these they formed an external, plastic, formal poetry; but that the age of internal, profound, analytical poetry has come. . . . These thoughts are not entirely new, and have been current in the world for some time; but it is well to realize, so far as possible, the great movement which is being worked out, and to formulate it.

19*th*. — A walk in the forest of Coëtquen. I came upon a spot quite remarkable for its wildness: the road descends by a sudden declivity into a narrow ravine where a little stream flows over a bed of slate, which gives to the waters a blackish tinge disagreeable at first sight, but which ceases to be so when you notice how it harmonizes with the black trunks of the old oaks, with the sombre foliage of the ivy, and how it contrasts with the smooth white limbs of the birches. A high north wind swept over the forest and made it utter deep roarings. The trees writhed in the blasts of the wind like madmen. Through the branches we could see the clouds coursing rapidly past in strange black masses, and seeming to graze the tree-tops. At

times there would come in this great, sombre, floating veil a rift through which a ray of sunshine darted and glided into the heart of the forest like a lightning-flash. These sudden, passing gleams of light gave to these depths, so majestic in their gloom, something strange and haggard, like a smile on the lips of death.

20*th.* — Winter takes leave of us smiling; he bids us farewell with a glorious sun resplendent in a sky as clear and pure as a Venetian glass. Time has taken one more step toward its goal. Oh, that it might, like the steeds of the Immortals, reach in four bounds the limits of its course!

I have finished reading the first volume of the *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes.* It is a fine sight to see liberty rising from the ruins of the Roman empire, and seating herself, with cross in hand, on the borders of the seas, at Venice, at Genoa, and at Pisa. She first appeared at Amalfi, at Naples, at Gaëta; but the kings expelled her. She then bade a long farewell to Southern Italy, and, coasting along the shore, settled at the north. Sismondi has failed to appreciate this fine drama of Italian liberty; he has not understood the character of the highest personage, of the true hero in this great scene, — the Pope. Those actors to whom

belongs the principal rôle he relegates almost among the supernumeraries. He represents the sovereign pontiffs as vulgarly ambitious men, as quarrelsome barons, with tiara on head and crozier in hand. This is a painful void in his work which makes itself felt at every page. He also pays off in very poor coin the Countess Matilda for her beautiful devotion to the cause of the Popes, and consequently to that of Italian liberty.

21*st.* — A pleasure exhausted. I have read the last page of the *Études de la Nature.* It is one of those books which one wishes would never come to an end. From it there is little to be gained for science, but much for poetry, for the elevation of the soul, and to aid in the contemplation of Nature. This book clears and enlightens a sense which we all possess, but which is veiled, vague, and almost deprived of activity, — that sense which gathers in physical beauties and conveys them to the soul, which spiritualizes them, harmonizes them, and combines them with ideal beauties, and thus enlarges its sphere of love and adoration.

Why should we ever complain of our isolation? For a long time I was possessed with this folly. For then I was living a mistaken life; I had established false relations between

the creation and my soul, and I suffered greatly, because creation refused me its treasures of delight, and, owing to these false relations, repelled me from its intimacy. In deepest solitude I was plunged in grief; the earth seemed to me worse than a bare, desert island in the heart of a wild ocean. It was a silence to terrify. Folly, pure folly! There is no isolation for him who knows how to take his place in the universal harmony, and to open his soul to all the impressions of this harmony. We then go so far as to feel almost physically that we live of God and in God: the soul drinks of this universal life till it loses breath; it floats in it like the fish in the sea.

Let us abjure the worship of idols; let us turn our backs on all the artificial gods, laden with carmine and with false ornaments, on all these images which have mouths, but do not speak. Let us adore Nature, free, ingenuous, and excluding none. Good God! can one poetize in presence of the boundless poetry of the universe? The Lord has made for you your poesy: it is creation! Do you expect to know more about it than He does?

22*nd*. — A profitless day; the letter which reached me last evening has completely paralyzed me. It is somewhat severe, but full of good

counsels. Unfortunately, I am so constituted that the best remedies fail to affect me, and what is far more strange, they sometimes aggravate my condition. And thus this letter, in touching my most sensitive wounds for the purpose of healing them, has set astir within me a vibration of all my past sufferings. All my bitter memories have been awakened with a start; in a few hours I have reproduced my trials of ten years, and have reproduced them, not in spirit, but in real and deep sensations. So long as these sad things remain stamped on my memory, my new life will be barren and apathetic. The least thing throws me back among these remembrances and leads to crises which exhaust and unman me. True, this past I speak of is still so near that it covers me with the whole length of its shadow. I hope that as I leave it behind me its present power will become weaker, and that at last I shall be freed from its influence. Still, I persist in thinking that there is within me such an organic defect, such disorganization, that I shall never be completely restored. My timid, restless, analytical side is too deep-rooted ever to leave me any rest. Perhaps, by dint of loving God, I may succeed in taking from it some of its power. It would be bearable were I alone to suffer from

it ; but those whom I love, and who are good enough to love me, suffer from it also. I distress them, and this is my greatest misfortune.

Very slowly do I advance on the side of intelligence. I have a thousand intuitions, but it is torment rather than progress. I read slowly, and never without anxious preoccupations ; even the contemplation of ravishing Nature cannot lull those thoughts which incessantly buzz, like mosquitoes, around my soul. I have to force myself to the study of languages, for which I am, nevertheless, eager. I am backward in all things, and yet I feel something strongly spurring me on.

24*th*. — E —— came to me deeply moved, with tears in his eyes. — " What troubles you ? " — " M. Féli [1] startled me." — " How ?" — "He was seated behind the chapel under the two Scotch fir-trees ; he took his stick and outlined a grave on the turf, saying to me, ' It is here I wish to lie ; but no tombstone, only a simple grassy mound. Oh, how good to be there ! ' I thought he was feeling ill ; that he foresaw his approaching end. For that matter, this is not the first time that he has been troubled with presentiments ; on leaving for Rome, he said to us : ' I do not expect to see you again ; do the

[1] The familiar name of M. de Lamennais.

good which I have not been able to do.' He is impatient to die. This is such a sad world for all Christian souls, and especially for a Christian soul like his."

26th. — A young man of Dauphiny, Henri Guillermard by name, addresses to me some verses on the subject of a few stanzas on Poland, published in *L'Avenir*, eighteen months ago. It is rather a droll experience to have one's *amour-propre* roused after so long a time and for so small a thing.

27th. — I am travelling very well along my new road. At times I experience great weariness ; but God soon restores my courage, doubtless because I have come to confide more in His great goodness. My work is becoming more sure and calm ; varied knowledge enters my mind, without confusion and tumult, peacefully and in good order.

I experience great delight in combining and mingling the study of ancient and modern art. The union and co-operation of these two studies is fraught with wonderful charm. This recalls to my mind a print in which a beautiful child is leading Homer by the hand.

28th. — Every time that we allow ourselves to be penetrated by Nature, our soul is opened to the most touching impressions. Whether Na-

ture smiles and adorns herself on her most beautiful days, or whether she becomes pale, gray, cold, and rainy, in autumn and in winter, there is something in her which moves not only the surface of the soul, but even its inmost depths, and awakens a thousand memories which to all appearance have no connection with the outward scene, but which doubtless hold communion with the soul of Nature through sympathies unknown to us. Lying in a grove of beeches, and breathing the warm air of spring, I experienced to-day this wonderful power.

29*th*. — Yesterday we extended our walk farther than usual. M. Gerbet, Mermet, and I reconnoitred to the north as far as the height of Saint-Hélen. This is a sort of belvedere from which the view extends over a vast horizon, sombre and monotonous to the south and east. Northward stretches the coast of the ocean, defined by a long and straight blue line. A little to the northeast, through an opening in the hills, we had a glimpse of the bay of Cancale. The waters, lighted by the rays of the sun, shone brilliantly and formed a line of light, by which we could distinguish them from the bluish coast of Normandy. Westward, we could see Dinan far away, with its tall spires half veiled by the

mist which always hangs over cities in the distant plains. In the same direction white country-houses stood out from a sombre background, and by their side invariably rose a clump of fir-trees which looked like a huge black giant mounting guard by the fireside. At intervals all along the horizon, pointed steeples pierced the air and rose like towers in this immense rampart. I was delighted with our excursion for having opened up to me this grand panorama, but especially for having given me a glimpse of the ocean.

30*th.* — *Oh ! c'est un beau spectacle à ravir la pensée*, — this immense circulation of life within the broad bosom of Nature, this life which springs from an invisible fountain and swells the veins of the universe ; obeying its upward impulse, it rises from kingdom to kingdom, ever becoming purer and nobler, to beat at last in the heart of man, the centre into which flow from all sides its thousand currents. There it meets the Divinity ; there, as on the altar where incense is burned, it evaporates, through an ineffable sacrifice, into the bosom of God. I feel as if deep and marvellous things could be said on the sacrifice of Nature in the heart of man and on the eucharistic immolation in this same heart. The simultaneousness of these two

sacrifices and the absorption of the one into the other on the same altar, this meeting of God and of all creation in humanity, would, it seems to me, open up deep and lofty vistas: *sublimitas et profundum.*

31st. — The love which speaks and sings and sighs in one part of creation is revealed in the other half in the form of flowers. All this efflorescence, with its wealth of forms and colours and perfumes, which gives splendor to the fields, is the expression of love, is love itself, which celebrates its sweet mysteries in the bosom of every flower. The blossoming branch, the bird that perches thereon to sing or to build his nest, the man who gazes at the branch and at the bird, are all moved by the same principle at different degrees of perfection. I was reading in Herder that flowers perish immediately after fecundation; that birds lose their song, their gayety, and some even the brilliant colouring of their plumage, after the nesting season; and that man rapidly declines toward old age when the period of passion is ended. There is much food for reflection in this law of decay so intimately connected with the law of love and of reproduction.

April 2nd. — The clouds have sent us rain all the day long. It has fallen, now in violent

showers, now in the gentle rustling of a fine dew. Still the blackbirds and the warblers, all the songsters, whistle and chatter and sing. Sometimes the clouds open and show great clear patches of sky through which the sun pours down floods of light. Then the clouds that fill the lower heavens glow, their successive and drifting ranks gradually retreating, but with their tints obscured and toned down by reason of their distance, until at length the beams die out against a huge mass which hangs motionless over the southeastern horizon, touching its projections with dazzling light and leaving its deep recesses in shadow.

4th. — A very rainy morning. Spring is taking a bad turn. Toward one o'clock the sky cleared, and we had a few moments of sunshine and penetrating heat. Again the clouds begin to invade the sky. I saw their gray heads rising above the horizon; in the twinkling of an eye we shall have lost the azure; they are flying toward the east. I am very fond of this racing aspect of the clouds; some seem to exchange glances as though to challenge one another to a trial of speed.

5th. — A day as beautiful as one could wish; some clouds, but only enough to make a landscape of the sky. More and more do they

assume their summer forms. Their different groups hang beneath the sun immovable, like flocks of sheep in the pastures during the great heat. I saw a swallow, and I heard the humming of the bees on the flowers. While seated in the sunshine so as to be penetrated to the very marrow by the divine spring, I experienced some of the impressions of my childhood; for a moment I looked upon the sky with its clouds, the earth with its woods, its songs, its hummings, as I then did. This renewal of the first aspect of things, of the physiognomy which our first glances found in them, is, to me, one of the sweetest reactions of childhood upon the current of life.

Oh, my God, what is my soul doing in thus giving itself up to such fugitive delights on Holy Friday, on this day so full of Thy death and of our redemption? There is within me I know not what evil spirit which excites in me a great loathing, and drives me, so to speak, to rebel against the holy exercises and the self-communion of the soul which should prepare us for the great solemnities of the faith. We have been in retreat for two days; and I do nothing but grow weary, my soul devoured by I know not what thoughts, and embittered even against the routine of the retreat. Ah, how well do I recognize in

all this the old leaven, from which as yet I have not cleansed my soul!

10*th.* — Three days have passed since the great festival. One anniversary less of the death and resurrection of the Saviour. Each year thus bears away with it its solemn festivals; when, then, will come the everlasting festival? I have witnessed a most touching sight: François has brought us one of his friends whom he has won over to the faith. This neophyte has taken part in the exercises of our retreat, and on Easter he received the Sacrament with us. François was overjoyed. This is a great work for him to have accomplished. François is very young; he is scarcely twenty years old. M. de la M—— is thirty and is married. There is something very touching and almost naïve in M. de la M—— allowing himself to be thus led to God by so young a man; and this youthful friendship which in François becomes an apostleship, is no less beautiful and touching. They are country neighbours, often work together, and write charming verses to each other on the events of their family life or on their friendship.

I have read with the most intense delight *Lucrèce Borgia.* It is needless to say that all that comes from Hugo is remarkable, and

bears the stamp of power. There is something in the temper of his genius so surprising, so brilliant, so bewildering, that after reading one of his works, whether it be drama, ode, or romance, we are filled with wonder, our souls are deeply moved, and our minds greatly excited. All these compositions stir some of the inmost fibres of humanity or probe some hidden depth. *Lucrèce Borgia* is far in advance of the others. Hugo was right when he said, in the Preface, that this drama would mark the most important date in his literary career. In fact, to me it seems as though his genius became incarnated in this work. In it I find at the highest point of realization the two genii which possess his soul, — the one, fiery, irrepressible, extreme in its impetuosity, taking pleasure in all that is strange and horrible, rushing into perilous and fantastic adventures where bloodshed and encounters make one's hair stand on end, fatalistic because its deviations carry it too high in the ideal of humanity without bringing it near enough to God ; the other calm, gentle, full of a tenderness that is almost plaintive, laying hold upon what is purest and highest in man and most fruitful in virtue and goodness. The *Odes et Ballades*, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, *Hernani*, *Han d'Islande*, *Les Feuilles d'Automne*, are all

stamped with this double character. These contrarieties of his soul have a tendency to become more and more individualized and to be brought out into clearer relief. He has formulated them in the Preface to his new drama, and has expressed them as a sublime creation in the drama itself. He will accomplish magnificent things with this dualism, but he will do great harm if he induces others to use it as he does.

15*th.*— At last I have seen the ocean. C——[1] and I started on Thursday, at one o'clock, with fine weather and a fresh breeze. We had seven leagues to walk; but we were so delighted to be on our way to the sea that we cared little for the length of the road. C—— uttered a cry of joy; this walk reminded him of the pedestrian excursion which he made in the south of Germany and in Switzerland. He greatly enjoys this method of locomotion. "In this humble guise," said he, "the traveller mingles with the people. He enters the inns to refresh himself or to rest; he sleeps in the cottages; he accosts those who are travellers like himself; and these casual encounters on the dusty highway, these men, each one of whom goes where God guides

[1] M. Edmond de Cazelès, son of the famous orator of the *Assemblée Constituante.*

him, sometimes lead to touching confidences." He then spoke with rapture of the beautiful lakes and the lofty mountains. At the charming little village of Châteauneuf, a beautiful view lay before us: on one side, to the northwest, there were rows of thickly wooded hills, each one bearing its white house, and at the foot of the hills the wide-spreading Rance shone like a mirror in the sun; on the other side, to the east, a well-cultivated and open plain lost itself in the horizon. Here and there gleamed a few points of precocious verdure; and the red and lively colouring of the woods showed that life and warmth were rising to the brow of Nature, and that she was ready to blossom forth. This grand spectacle, beautified by all the magic power of the sun, led our conversation to the study and adoration of Nature. I was delighted to hear C—— express on this subject precisely what I feel at the bottom of my heart. He added: "This great mystery of the goodness of God, which is manifested to all, good and bad, through this unfolding of natural beauties and riches, is, in my opinion, a great cause of hope for the destiny of man in the next life." The thought of death which came to us through these reflections seemed so sweet and so consoling that we were seized with a desire to die. We had lifted from

the face of death that hideous mask thrown over it by the terror of evil consciences; and it smiled upon us. Would it not be the same with all if they were thrilled by a touch of love for celestial things or even by a little curiosity? He also said to me: "I have been crowned with the greatest blessings, and have grievously misused them; but such is my confidence in God that I feel sure of my salvation." We continued our conversation very far along this line of thought. Then we were led to talk of our inner life, of our struggles, our way of taking life, etc. Little by little the talk drifted onto poets and love. C—— knows many things about Lamartine; he has the happiness to be his friend. He knows much about love; he has long and ardently loved, and he loves still, but with a dawning disenchantment. Lamartine, Hugo, Nodier, and the rest led us to the gates of Saint-Malo, soothing in a measure the cruel sufferings of my feet, squeezed and torn as they were in boots which were much too narrow. A little after sunset, we came in view of the town. We caught sight of it all at once at the turn of a street in Saint-Servan. What struck me at first was a row of vessels whose enormous bodies presented a black frontage of forms scarcely distinguishable in the darkness, but whose masts and ropes rising

against the sky outlined, as it were, embroideries in the evening light. Behind these vessels we espied a black mass encircled by ramparts. It was Saint-Malo, a real sea-bird's nest; and farther on, though we could distinguish nothing, a great monotonous voice: it was the ocean. We reached the city by way of the beach, thanks to the low tide; we took rooms at the Hôtel de France, whence there was a view of the sea, and for the first time in my life I fell asleep with the ocean two hundred feet from my bed, and under the spell of this great wonder. On the morrow, quick to the sea. The tide was beginning to come in; still we had time to make on foot the round of the rock on which Saint-Malo rests. What I felt as I plunged my gaze into this infinitude, it would be difficult to express. The vision is too great for the soul; she is terrified at this mighty apparition and no longer knows whither she goes. Yet I remember that I first thought of God, then of the deluge, of Columbus, of the continents beyond the deep, of shipwrecks, of sea-fights, of Byron, of René, who embarked from Saint-Malo, and who, borne away on these same billows that I was contemplating, fixed his gaze upon the grated window where shone the lamp of the nun. Yet this first visit was so short and the impression so turbulent,

so confused, that nothing very positive or very restful remained in my soul. After three hours, which passed like a moment, we left on a small boat which ascended the Rance as far as Dinan, and then completed our journey on foot, rather tired in body, but happy in mind.

22*nd.* — I have stumbled grievously, and I find it difficult to recover from my distress. With such emotions all work is impossible. Everything becomes bitter, with such a taste of gall in the mouth. Is it my fault? A little perhaps. I ought not to have taken these things so much to heart; but it must also be confessed that unless one's spirit has been completely crushed, unless it has been compressed, cramped, wrung so as not to leave within it one drop of the love of independence, it is difficult to smother this cry of liberty, or perhaps of pride. This little adventure augurs very badly for my new life; if so slight a trial has exhausted my patience and all my good resolutions, I cannot hope much for my future resignation. Disenchantment has again taken hold of me. All that smiled on me yesterday frowns upon me to-day; all that was white is black; what was clear is turbid. My soul —

N'est plus qu'une onde obscure où le sable a monté.

It is a misfortune to be thus constituted. My happiness must be pure and complete at all points; the slightest blemish disfigures it in my eyes; a dark cloud in the sky mars the entire firmament. This is folly, and the most ill-advised of all follies, for there are no such joys in this world; but it would seem as though it were my lot to be as poor in illusions as in realities. *Fiat! fiat!*

23rd. — The awakening of vegetation is wonderfully slow. I am almost in a bad humour with Nature, who seems to take pleasure in making us lose patience. The larches, the birches, two lilacs which we have in our garden, the rose-bushes, and the hedges of hawthorn, have scarcely any verdure; all the rest is sombre and sleeps almost as in winter, except a few beeches, which, more spring-like than their companions, begin to variegate the black mass of the grove which borders the pond. Still, all the birds have arrived; the nightingales sing night and day; the sun shines wonderfully; the winged insects buzz and whirl, — everywhere is life and joy except in me. I do not know from what strange inconsistency it is that I have found it harder to live of late than during the winter days, although even then I was not free from trouble. I remind

myself of a dead tree in the midst of a verdant wood.

24*th.* — I have finished reading the *Physiologie végétale*, by Candolle, 3 vols. in 8°. The first treats of nutrition, the second of reproduction, the third of the influence of external agents. Notwithstanding the chemistry which occupies an important place in this work, especially in the first volume, and of which I do not understand a word, I have taken lively pleasure in reading it. An entirely new world has been revealed to me, somewhat vague, it is true, and one within which I have not taken more than a step; but, however that may be, it is no small happiness to open up a new perspective in the contemplation of this world, and to have a taste of the life and beauty of Nature. An infinite number of details have escaped me, but the impression which remains is precious. It has redoubled my taste for the observation of natural objects, and has drawn me toward an inexhaustible source of consolation and of poetry. Ah, what joy there must be in heaven, since we take such deep delight in the merest glimpse of the order and the vital energy of our globe, which is so small. On the other hand, trouble and anguish increase; every day we run against phenomena which we do not under-

stand, — vulgar phenomena, — and that is all the more cruel. But we must be patient in view of the future, and accustom our souls to know how to live on little.

25*th.* — It has just been raining. Nature is fresh and radiant ; the earth seems to taste with rapture the water which brings it life. One would say that the throats of the birds had also been refreshed by this rain ; their song is purer, more vivacious, more brilliant, and vibrates wonderfully in the air, which has become most sonorous and resounding. The nightingales, the bullfinches, the blackbirds, the thrushes, the golden orioles, the finches, the wrens, — all these sing and rejoice. A goose, shrieking like a trumpet, adds by contrast to the charm. The motionless trees seem to listen to all these sounds. Innumerable apple-trees in full bloom look like balls of snow in the distance ; the cherry-trees, all white as well, rise like pyramids or spread out like fans of flowers.

The birds seem at times to aim at those orchestral effects where all the instruments are blended in a mass of harmony.

Would that we could identify ourselves with spring ; that we could go so far as to believe that in ourselves breathe all the life and all the love that ferment in Nature ; that we could feel

ourselves to be, at the same time, flower, verdure, bird, song, freshness, elasticity, rapture, serenity! What, then, should I become? There are moments when, by dint of concentrating ourselves upon this idea and gazing fixedly on Nature, we fancy that we experience something like this.

May 1st. — Oh, how forlorn it is! — wind, rain, cold. This first day of May gives me the idea of a wedding-day which has become a funeral-day. Last evening the moon, the stars, the azure, the limpidness, the clearness, were enough to fill one with rapture. To-day I have seen nothing but showers rushing after each other in great columns through the air, chased wildly along by a mad wind. I have heard nothing but this same wind moaning all around me with those woful and sinister groans which it finds or learns I know not where; one would say that it was a breath of evil, of calamity, of all the afflictions which I fancy to be floating in our atmosphere, shaking our houses and coming to chant, at all our windows, its mournful prophecies. This wind, whatever it may be, while it moved my soul to sadness by its mysterious power, unsettled Nature without by its material influence, and perhaps also by something more, — for who can say that we

know the full extent of the relations and the intercourse of the elements with each other? Through my windows I have watched this wind raging against the trees and driving them to despair. It sometimes burst over the forest with such impetuosity that it convulsed it like the sea, and I fancied I saw the entire forest revolve and spin upon its roots, like an immense whirlwind. The four great fir-trees behind the house were from time to time lashed with such fury that they seemed to be seized with fright, and uttered, as it were, cries of terror. enough to make one tremble. The birds which ventured to take wing were carried along like straws; I saw them drifting rapidly away, giving scarcely any sign of their feeble struggle against the current, and being at most just able to keep their wings extended. Those that remain still hidden give barely a few signs of life by beginning a song which they never finish. The flowers are bruised and crumpled, and all is desolate. I am sadder than in winter. On such days a sort of strange despair makes itself felt at the bottom of my soul, in the most internal, in the deepest part of its substance; it is like desolation and darkness outside of God. Oh, my God, why should my rest be troubled by what passes in the air, and the peace of my

soul be thus given over to the will of the winds? Ah, it is that I know not how to rule myself, that my will is not united to Thine; and as there is nothing else by which it can be guided, I have become the plaything of all that breathes upon the earth.

3rd. — Joyous day, full of sunshine, warm breeze, perfumes in the air, felicity in the soul. The verdure visibly increases; it has sprung from the garden to the thicket; it has gained possession of the whole length of the pond; it bounds, so to speak, from tree to tree, from thicket to thicket, in the fields and on the hill-sides, and I can see that it has already reached the forest, and is beginning to spread over its broad back. Soon it will extend as far as the eye can reach; and all these broad expanses, bounded by the horizon, will sway and surge like a vast sea, — a sea of emerald. Yet a few more days, and we shall have all the pomp, all the display, of the vegetable kingdom.

7th. — I have this moment received a letter and some verses from my dear François,[1] in answer to the poem which I had sent him. This friendship that I have formed is a very sweet one. François is one of the freshest, one of the

[1] M. François du Breil de Marzan, author of *La Famille* and *L'Autel.*

most transparent, one of the most consoling souls that I have ever known. Furthermore, he is a poet, otherwise this would not be possible; and a poet, not by effort and mental labour, of which there are so many, but by expansion and natural expression. Poetry flows from him like water from a fountain. His friendship is all the dearer to me, and I understand his talent all the better, that I am far from being worthy of the one or approaching the other. I resemble him so little; but I find consolation in the thought that friendship is born of contrasts.

9th. — Five or six days of sunshine without the shadow of a cloud. The unfolding of the verdure is almost completed. Nature has decked herself with all her jewels. She is at that unique point of freshness, of purity, and of grace which one should make haste to grasp, for it soon passes away. The leaves which opened yesterday are of a transparent green, and as tender as the dew; I hardly dare to touch them for fear of bruising them. Day before yesterday, however, Élie and I picked some from the beech-trees to make them into a dish, after the fashion of the Bernardines. It was not bad; there was a relish to it, but it was rather hard. I really had compunctions in picking these poor new-born leaves. They would have lived out their

life; they would have rejoiced in the sun and rocked in the wind. I thought of all this while I was cutting them, and still my hand went on laying waste the branches. Yet while committing this little cruelty, I was having one of those talks with Élie which recur from time to time, and always possess a certain fascination and bring relief to my soul. On our return with our basket full, we promised each other that we would gather leaves now and then, calling to mind this talk of ours.

La Chênaie gives me the idea of an old woman, all wrinkled and hoary, changed back by a fairy's wand into a young and most graceful girl of sixteen. She has all the freshness, all the brilliancy, all the mysterious charm of virginity. But, alas, how short a time will it last! Yesterday, M. Féli was showing us some leaves which were already riddled and their edges gnawed by the insects.

It has rained all night long. Great increase of verdure and of life. At about seven o'clock, I strolled along the borders of the pond. The trees which bent over the water were slowly dripping, and each drop fell on the smooth surface with a gentle echo which had something plaintive about it. One would have said that the trees, having wept all night, were letting fall their last tears.

" Do you know," said M. Féli, on the evening of day before yesterday, " why man is the most suffering among all creatures? It is because he has one foot in the finite and the other in the infinite, and that he is torn asunder, not by four horses, as in certain horrible times, but between two worlds." He also said to us, on hearing the clock strike, " If one were to say to this clock that in an instant it would be destroyed, it would none the less strike its hour until that instant had arrived. My children, be like the clock: whatever is to happen, always strike your hour."

22*nd.* — There are no more flowers on the trees. Their mission of love accomplished, they have died, like a mother who expires in giving birth. The fruits have set; they inhale that vital and reproductive energy which is to produce new individuals. An innumerable generation is at this moment hanging from the branches of all the trees, from the fibres of the humblest grasses, like children on the maternal bosom. All these germs, incalculable in their number and diversity, are swinging in their cradle between heaven and earth, given over to the care of the winds, whose charge it is to rock these new-born creatures. Future forests sway unseen on living forests.

All Nature is full of the cares of her immense maternity.

23rd. — We succeeded in launching on the pond an old long-boat which we dragged out of the mud where it had lain buried for more than a year. It cost us a great deal of trouble to repair it ; but we are well repaid for our pains by the pleasure we take in our little expeditions. This boat used to belong to a Swedish vessel. Who knows what seas she has traversed ? Even though she may have gone around the world, she will all the same come to decay on a little pond.

June 12th. — These twenty days have passed miserably, and so miserably that I have not had the courage to write a word here or elsewhere. My trouble has taken hold of me anew with extreme violence, and has, so to speak, reduced me to the last extremity. It may be compared to the severest sufferings I have endured in the past. A letter from Eugénie, which reached me in the height of the attack, did me great good, but the crisis had to take its course. . . . My God and my good angel, have pity on me! Preserve me from such sufferings!

13th. — Without the verdure, one would think it December. The fine season has gone I know not where. The sun will lose his reputation ;

it is cold enough to make one shiver. This detestable west wind has filled the sky with its innumerable flocks of clouds, and inundates us with rain. One would think that, up there, winter with its mournful procession were passing by.

There is nothing more distressing than this contrast of the heavenly vault, all darkened by rain-clouds, with the verdant earth, with this carpet so rich, so marvellously variegated, which Spring has spread over the surface of the earth to rest her beauteous feet upon. It suggests to my fancy a wedding celebrated in a church hung with black. After all, even on the finest days, what a difference there is between the sky of Brittany and the sky of our South! Here the summer on its festal days always has about it something sad, veiled, and limited. It is like a miser who on occasion lavishes his money; there is something niggardly even in his magnificence. Long live our sky of Languedoc, so liberal in light, so blue, so broadly arched!

15*th.* — *Strange dream!* I dreamed that I was alone in a vast cathedral. I was there under the impression of the presence of God, and in that condition of the soul when one is conscious of nothing but of God and one's self, when a voice arose, — a voice infinitely sweet, a woman's voice, and yet it filled the whole

church like a great choir. I recognized it at once; it was the voice of L[ouise], *silver-sweet sounding.*

19*th.* — Three nights in succession the same figure has appeared to me. What can this mean?

23*rd.* — "I feel indeed that I am a poor creature who has but little spirit." Ah, how well that is said, my dear Bernardin! How well hast thou rendered the sentiment of a soul which others are striving to raise above its sphere, and which, impressed by its powerlessness, cries out, "I feel indeed that I am a poor creature," as thou makest Virginie to say. For a long time have I been repeating to myself these words; it is the summing up of all my labours, of all my life. Ah, if I were barren only on that side, that would still be endurable; but the trouble is that my barrenness is almost universal, — yes, universal, — and that I shall never succeed in bringing forth from my mind much that is worth anything, not for myself, but for those who have a right to expect something from me. This is what grieves me. I have mistaken my path. I might have done something useful by taking an entirely opposite direction. It would be impossible to carry experiments further than I have done. The

one which I am now in a fair way to finish will never be repeated. After that, who can say what will become of me? The invisible thread of Providence will always draw me to the best side.

28*th.* — I have many things to say, so let me hasten. I experience an irritation which must needs speak and find expression before all else. I have suffered so much in my soul that I ought to be proof against pin-pricks, were it the same with the soul as with the body, which becomes hardened to blows, like iron beneath the hammer. But with the soul it is just the reverse. I would greatly desire[1] . . .

July 4th. — I have received my death-blow; behold me formally and duly arraigned and convicted of the grossest blunder that could be fancied. I look upon this experience as a judgment without appeal, and it is all the better from one point of view, — it will teach me finally to value myself for what I am worth. The rate of my valuation is henceforth fixed, and by experts. This is the result of listening to vain thoughts: I said to myself that sooner or later evil would come of this; but I laughed at myself, I became a boaster, and to-day here I am disgracefully

[1] The end of the phrase is erased in the original manuscript.

repulsed all along the line. I swear, by all that I have suffered and by the respect which I owe to my soul, that this shall be my last sortie. I want to barricade myself within my own domain, to wall myself up there, so as to remove all temptation, moving no more than a boundary-stone, were I to be consumed with ennui. I have read somewhere that thousands of animalcules swim with ease in a drop of water; the circumference of my intellectual domain is very nearly equal, I think, to that of the drop, and I am there alone. Have I not reason to be happy without further disturbing my repose by dreams of ambition? Ah, yes, my little world, my little imperceptible droplet, thou art mine alone, and henceforth thine alone shall I be. Should I meet any living creature as minute as myself who implores me to admit him, I will willingly show hospitality, I will receive him cordially, full of gratitude for the sympathy which urged him to knock at my door; I will take him all over my dwelling, displaying to his curiosity all the details, as one would in a palace. We will talk with delight of a thousand little, little things, which for us would be great things, — joys, troubles, labours, discoveries, philosophy, poetry, all this would have a place in our talks, but in proportions suited to the infinitely limited

extent of our conceptions and to the narrowness of our souls. After having indulged in talks and kindnesses to our hearts' content, I will conduct my guest back to the door, and giving him a kiss and a farewell (two touching things which go together), I will push the bolts and will remain quiet in my microscopic universe, until the knocker again warns me that there is outside a thought that thinks of me.

17*th*. — Yesterday I saw the swallows flying in the clouds, — a presage of clear weather which has not deceived me. I write at the close of a beautiful day, very brilliant and very warm, after a month and a half of clouds and cold ; but this glorious sun, which usually does me so much good, has passed over me like an extinct star. It has left me as it found me, cold, icy, insensible to all external impressions, and suffering, in the little of me that still lives, fruitless and paltry trials. My internal life withers away every day ; I sink into a nameless abyss, and it must be that I have already reached a great depth, for the light scarcely comes to me, and I feel the cold gaining upon me. Oh, well do I know what is dragging me down ! I have always said it, and to-day, as I fall, will say it more emphatically than ever : it is the distressing conviction of my impotence, it is this fatal impotence,

a truth the germ of which I brought here with me and which has so increased during these eight months that it has ended by crushing me, by overthrowing me, and precipitating me in a fall the limits of which I do not know. Yes, I fall, — that is very certain; for I no longer see what I once saw, I no longer feel what I once felt.

August 1st. — For some time past I have been struggling, like a converted sinner, to love what I hated and to hate what I loved. I have solemnly abjured poetry, contemplation, all my ideal life. I have promised myself to live very peacefully in a little world of my own making, whence I have banished all the beautiful phantoms which filled the one in which I used to dwell. I thought that an existence circumscribed within a very narrow circle of reality, confined like the ant in a small hole dug in the sand, would be better for me than those adventurous and sterile flights of thought into a world which has clearly repulsed me. But alas! it is written that my poor imagination shall not have where to lay its head here below. This little corner which I had chosen for it among realities, wherein it might fall asleep, rejects it as did the ideal sphere. What will become of me in this state of suspension between two spheres, in this

region where thought sustains itself only because it is equally rejected by both?

12*th.* — I take up my pen again only after long intermissions, because the sweet and expansive hours no longer return to me excepting at great intervals. Such a coldness has taken hold of my soul that everything which falls therein is immediately benumbed. I know not what paralysis it is that has struck me; what apathy, a hundred times more painful than the most nervous sensibility, causes me to pass whole weeks without caring for anything.

14*th.* — After a long series of brilliant days, I love to see the sky, some fine morning, hung with gray, and all Nature reposing herself, as it were, after her festal days, in melancholy calm. It is even so to-day. An immense, immovable veil, without the smallest wrinkle, covers the whole face of the sky; the horizon wears a wreath of bluish vapours; not a breath stirs the air. Thanks to this silence, every sound from the distant plains reaches the ear, — labourers' songs, children's voices, the calls and oft-repeated cries of the animals, and from time to time the barking of a dog from I know not where, and the crow of the cocks as they answer each other like sentinels. Within me also all is calm and at rest. A gray and somewhat melan-

choly veil has spread itself over my soul, like the peaceful clouds over Nature. A great silence prevails; and I hear, as it were, the voices of a thousand sweet and touching memories which rise up in the far-off past and come to murmur in my ear.

25*th.* — It will be a year to-morrow since I left for R—— with Eugénie: sweet anniversary. To-morrow also will be for me a day of travel. I am going to La Brousse to spend a few days of friendship and consolation with my dear François.

September 1*st.* — Alas! this, then, is how all things end: regrets, tears! It is only an hour since I returned from a charming little trip, and now I am crying like a child, and am consumed with regrets for a joy which I ought to have accepted without clinging to it, knowing that it must be of short duration; but it is always thus. Whenever I meet with some little happiness, I am disconsolate when we have to part, because I know that I shall fall back into myself and resume my mournful routine.

3*rd.* — Here I am struggling with a terrible position, — I, the weakest of all characters, the most timid of all wills.

26*th.* — The memories which are connected with objects of nature . . .

PLOËRMEL, October 1st.

I do not know what stopped me short in the very midst of my phrase ; but I wanted to express what I felt at the sight of a heavy fog which hung over the plain. When the sun had risen high above the horizon I saw all this mist clear away imperceptibly, become diffused with light, and begin to ascend toward the sky, where it soon vanished. Not a quarter of an hour had passed before the most perfect serenity reigned ; but some time after the centre of the horizon had cleared, I still saw some trails of mist flying over the distant ridges, like the last fugitives of a routed army, and it was with this that my recollection and my unfinished phrase were connected. Last year, at about this time, I was also watching the mist rising toward the sky and uncovering the mountain-tops ; and in these majestic regions this scene was invested with a character of infinite grandeur. One might have fancied that he saw primeval darkness rolling away, God removing with His own hand, like a sculptor, the veil which concealed His work, and the earth exposed in all the purity of its primitive forms to the rays of the first sun. But this is not yet the keynote of my reminiscence. Often, at the moment when the mist began to lift from the earth and to become diaphanous, and I,

with my forehead glued to my window, watched its changes, a blue dress — Oh, how beautiful the sky is to-night! While in the midst of writing, I turned my head toward the window, and my gaze was flooded with tints so sweet, so soft, so velvety, I saw so many wondrous things on the horizon, that I could not resist this exclamation of delight. It is the twilight of autumn in all its melancholy. The distant tree-tops, with their majestic plumes and capricious undulations, form a marvellous boundary to the range of vision. The trees which stand out alone, either from their size or position, have physiognomies, characters, I might almost say faces, which seem to express the silent passions and the unknown things which are going on, perchance, under the bark of these immobile beings. With the attitudes they take and the tossing of their heads, they seem to be acting some mysterious scene in the glimmer of the evening. Every day, since I have been here, the twilight brings me these magnificent spectacles. — A blue dress, I was saying, passed rapidly by in the mist and disappeared in the white obscurity, like the bluebird, which glides so rapidly along the ponds and brooks. Sometimes this apparition would sing in her flight and leave behind her a trail, as it were, of silvery

notes which rolled forth with ineffable rapidity and melody. A quarter of an hour later, when the atmosphere had cleared, and the trailing end of the fog still crept over the tops of the most distant mountains. I saw L—— return home with a slow step and serious air, like a philosopher returning from meditation.

I have wept over partings both last year and this year, almost date for date. These regrets should not be compared ; they are of a nature too different : only in depth do they resemble each other. Both are inexpressible. If I were forced to make a comparison between them, I would say that last year, in the month of September, at two o'clock in the afternoon, under a brilliant sun, I bade farewell to that happiness which we meet at a certain point in the path of life, which leads us on a few leagues, talking of ravishing things with the words of an angel, and then, all at once, there comes a crossway, and it turns to the left if we are obliged to turn to the right, saying, with jesting sweetness, "Traveller, farewell ! traveller, I wish you a good journey." And I would add that this year, in the month of September, at four o'clock in the afternoon, in gray and foggy weather, I embraced on leaving him a man whom I love with that ardent affection which resembles no

other, kindled in the depths of the soul by that mysterious power reserved to men of genius. M. Féli was my guide in life during nine months, at the end of which we met the fatal crossway. The habit of living with him had led me not to notice what was passing within me; but, since I no longer see him, I have discovered there a great rent which came at the moment of separation.

2*nd.* — Six o'clock in the evening. This is the moment when memories come back to me by thousands, like the birds which at the same hour hasten in crowds to the rendezvous they have made on some great poplar, where they warble confusedly until night sends them to sleep. The setting of the sun is entrancing: the clouds, which have escorted him to the west, stand aside at the horizon like a group of courtiers on the approach of their king, and then close in again after he has passed by. After the sun has set, some of these clouds again mount up into the sky, laden with the richest colours. The most massive remain at the gates of the palace, like a company of guards with golden breastplates. These clouds do not quite touch the horizon: a luminous band which tapers off at the extremities divides them from the blue line of the earth. Some slender and distant poplars, which seem

to rise from this blue line, and whose delicate forms stand out sharply against the clear and luminous background, seem like the masts of vessels at anchor on the horizon of the sea.

4*th.* — If I knew how to draw a little, I should have brought away with me yesterday some memento of our expedition to Josselin. I have at last gazed upon an old baronial castle. Enormous towers, Cyclopean ramparts, enclose within their massive belt the most graceful, the slenderest, and apparently the frailest architecture, — one of those dreams of the Middle Ages embroidered high in the air on stone with the delicacy of the fairies' needle. At twilight, take a leaf where the tissue has been eaten away by insects, watch by the dying light this network of delicate fibres and veins, and you will have in miniature, so to speak, the delicious fancies of Gothic art.

5*th.* — The most beautiful days, the most delightful studies, cannot stifle within me that restless and complaining spirit which forms the groundwork of humanity.

14*th.* — While I am following up a swarm of vain thoughts, like a man who has no longer anything to trouble him, my whole future is overturned. I have been told that I must go back to the world. Strange ! I have surprised

myself a hundred times longing for the novel life one leads there, and, now that solitude and seclusion have bid me leave them, the world inspires me with horror. Ah, my place was indeed here! and, notwithstanding my worldly whims and caprices, I clung to it from the depths of my soul. I was beginning to see clearly into my destiny, and now again I find myself knowing nothing about it. My God, how cruel it is! What, then, wilt Thou do with me among men? What is to become of me in this vortex, — of me, the weakest of creatures? Of a truth, I see in this my trial. I thought that I was already sufficiently convinced of my powerlessness, of my weakness, of the sickly and imperfect constitution of my moral nature. Alas! it would seem as though I did not sufficiently realize it, since I am sent back to that great destroyer of all inward joy, of all lofty energy, of all ingenuous hope, — the world.

24*th*. — Truly, a run over the fields is a great delight. What happiness to fling down the heavy chain of daily life and escape to the country, where one can breathe freely and taste the noble rapture of a few hours' independence; where the heart is lifted up and the thoughts turn to contemplation; where one is overjoyed at finding one's self — humanity — alone with

Nature. We made the circuit of a pond which is at least two leagues in circumference; it is a long time since a walk has given me so much pleasure. The sight of water always has an immense fascination for me, and to-day was all that heart could wish to give me delight. This pond, of broad expanse, spreads out between two woods, the borders of which form irregular but all the more graceful lines. As the day declined, there was something infinitely melancholy in this sheet of vague, green water, in the wan colour of the woods, which are beginning to lose their leaves, and in the gray tint of the sky, where flocks of crows and wild ducks passed silently by. A thousand thoughts of sweet sadness came to me: I remembered that in my childhood I loved to sit at that same hour on the parapet of the terrace at Cayla, and watch the birds pass by as they went to find a shelter for the night.

LE VAL, December 7th.

After a year of perfect calm, with the exception of those internal storms which should not be attributed to solitude, — for she wrapped me in a peace and silence so deep that a soul less restless than mine would have fallen into a delicious sleep, — after a year, I say, of this complete calm, my fortune, which had allowed me to enter the

8

sanctuary so that I might find some rest, has knocked at the door to call me back; for she had not pursued her way, but had seated herself upon the threshold, waiting till I should have regained sufficient strength to set out again on my journey. "Thou hast halted long enough," said she; "come, let us go on!" And she took me by the hand; and behold her again on her way, like those poor women whom we meet on the roads, leading a child who follows on with a disconsolate air. But what folly in me to complain! Are there no other sufferings in this world besides my own to water with my tears? Henceforth, every time that I am tempted to call upon the Lord and my tears for my own sake, I shall say to the fountain-head of my tears, "Be closed;" and to the Lord, "Lord, listen not to my lamentations;" for it is good that I should suffer, — I, who, like all feeble souls, can purchase nothing in heaven by the merit of my acts, and who can gain something there only through the virtue of suffering. Such souls have no wings by which to rise heavenward; and the Lord, who wishes, nevertheless, that they should come, sends them help. He places them on a pyre of thorns and sends down the fire of sorrow; when the wood burns, it rises toward heaven as a white cloud, like those doves which took their flight

from the dying flames of the martyr's pyre. It is the soul, which has consummated its sacrifice, and which has been made so light through the fire of tribulation that it can rise like smoke to the sky. The wood is heavy and motionless; set it on fire, and a part of it will rise even to the skies.

Lord, I am one of these souls; therefore I must not shed tears to extinguish my pyre. But I will shed floods of tears for those who suffer and who ought not to suffer. I will shed them above all for him who is to-day a prey to the deepest sorrow; for him who has done so much good that he seemed to have already such abundant merit as to have no need to add to it through suffering. I will weep over him and over those who do him wrong, and who have done me wrong through him. As Jesus Christ shed for His executioners the priceless virtue of His blood, it is indeed a very small thing that men should let fall their tears for their enemies.

I shall treasure up these tears and the precious memories that I carry away with me from under this blessed roof of La Chênaie, which during a whole year has shielded my life, hidden within the bosom of a priest whom men account as one of their glories upon this earth, and whom the saints claim as one of theirs in heaven.

Although my sorrow is most bitter, I will not hang my harp upon the willows, for a Christian, unlike an Israelite, must sing in a strange land the song of the Lord and of the man of God.

And see how[1] full of goodness is Providence toward me! Fearing lest the sudden change from the soft and temperate atmosphere of a religious life to the torrid zone of the world should prove too great a trial for my soul, it has led me, on leaving that sacred refuge, to a house placed upon the borders of these two regions, where, without being in solitude, one is yet not in the world, — a house whose windows open on one side upon the plain where stirs the tumult of men, and on the other side upon the wilderness where sing the servants of God. I wish to put on record here an account of my sojourn in this place, for the days spent under this roof are full of happiness, and I know that in the future I shall often turn back to read again of these joys of the past. — A pious man and a poet,[2] a woman

[1] See in our first edition, vol. i. pp. 83–97, a variation of the end of this fragment and of the four following fragments We substitute this time for the text of the *Cahier Vert* a version which the author had subsequently written on some fly-leaves, and which he would have without any doubt preferred.

[2] Hippolyte La Morvonnais, author of *La Thébaïde des Grèves.*

whose heart beats so in unison with his that they seem like parts of but one soul ; a child whose name is Marie, like her mother, the first rays of whose love and intelligence shine like a star through the white veil of childhood ; a simple life in an old-fashioned house ; the ocean, which, morning and evening, brings us its harmonies ; finally, a pilgrim who descends from Mount Carmel on his way to Babylon and who has left at the door his staff and his sandals, to take a seat at the hospitable board, — here is material for a Biblical poem, could I describe things as well as I can feel them.

8th. — Yesterday a west wind blew furiously. I saw the ocean troubled, but this tumult, however sublime it may be, is far from equalling, in my eyes, the sight of the sea blue and serene. But why assert that one is not equal to the other? Who could measure these two sublimities and say, "The second is greater than the first"? Let us merely say, "My soul takes more delight in serenity than in storm."

Yesterday there was a great battle on the watery plains. The leaping waves seemed like the countless Tartar cavalry galloping ceaselessly over the plains of Asia. The entrance to the bay is barred, as it were, by a chain of granite

isles. It was a sight to watch the billows rushing to the assault and with frightful outcries throwing themselves madly against these masses of rock; it was a sight to watch them take their start and try who should best clear the black reef-heads. The most daring or the nimblest leaped onto the other side with a great cry; the others, heavier or more awkward, shattered themselves against the rock, tossing up foam of dazzling whiteness, and then retreated with dull and deep growlings, like house-dogs thrust back by the traveller's staff.

From the top of a cliff where we could with difficulty keep our footing against the shocks of the wind, we witnessed these strange struggles. The immeasurable tumult of the sea, the noisy rushing of the waves, the no less rapid but silent passing of the clouds, the sea-birds that floated in the sky, balancing their slender bodies between two arched wings of redundant spread,—all this mass of wild and sonorous harmonies converged toward the souls of two beings, five feet high, planted on the crest of a cliff, shaken like two leaves by the force of the wind, and in this immensity hardly more conspicuous than two birds perched upon a clod of earth. Oh, how strange and beautiful is one of these moments when sublime agitation and deep revery meet together,

when the soul and Nature rise to their whole height face to face!

From the cliff we descended into a gorge which disclosed an inlet of the sea, such as the ancients knew how to describe, where a few peaceful waves fall murmuring to sleep, while their foolish brethren beat against the reefs and struggle with one another. Immense bowlders of gray granite mottled with white moss lie scattered in disorder over the slope of the hill, which had been worn away and formed this creek. They are so strangely placed and seem so on the verge of falling that one would say some giant had amused himself one day by hurling them from the crest of the hill, and that they had stopped wherever they met with an obstacle, — some a few steps from their point of departure, others halfway down the hill; and yet they seem suspended instead of stopped, or rather they appear to be ever rolling downward. The noise of the winds and the waves, as they resound through these sonorous depths, produces the most beautiful harmonies. We lingered there for a time, leaning on our staves and filled with wonder.

9th. — The moon, together with a few stars, was still shining when the bell called us to Mass. I am especially fond of this morning Mass, said

between the last glimmerings of the stars and the first rays of the sun.

In the evening Hippolyte and I took a walk along the shore. We wanted to see what the ocean was like at the close of a gray and calm December day. The mist veiled the distant waters, but left enough range to the eye to give a sense of the infinite beyond. We stationed ourselves upon a point where the hut of a custom-house officer stood, and leaned with our backs against the hut. On the right, the woods, scattered over the slope of the shore, stretched out in the pale glimmering light their bare and slender branches, which whistled softly in the wind. Far away on the left, the *Tour des Ébihens* at times half disappeared, as though swallowed up in the shadows, and at times reappeared with a feeble glimmer on its front whenever a furtive ray of the twilight succeeded in breaking through the clouds. The sound of the sea was calm and dreamy as on the most beautiful days; but in it there was something more plaintive. Our ears followed this sound, as it swelled along the whole length of the shore; and we held our breath until the wave which had produced it had withdrawn to give place to the next. I believe that it is from the deep and solemn voice which rolls from the breaking billow, and from the

shrill and stony sound of the receding wave, as it lightly washes the sand and the shells, that arises this wonderful tone of the song of the sea. But why dissect this music? I shall never say anything of value on this subject, for I understand nothing of analysis; so let us return to sentiment.

Darkness closed in upon us, but we did not dream of leaving, for the harmonies of the sea went on increasing as all became hushed upon the earth and as night unfolded her mysteries. Like those statues which the ancients placed on promontories, we remained immovable, as though fascinated and bound by the spell of the ocean and of the night. We gave no other sign of life than to raise our heads as we heard the whistling wings of the wild ducks passing by.

My wandering fortunes have thus led me to a solitary headland in Brittany, there to dream all through an autumn evening. There for a few hours was silenced all that inward tumult never before completely hushed since the first storm burst forth within me. There, all the sweet and celestial melancholies thronged into my soul with the harmonies of the ocean, and my soul wandered as if in a paradise of reveries. Oh, when I shall have left Le Val and shed my farewell tears on the bosom of your friendship; when

I am in Paris, where there is neither vale nor ocean, nor souls like yours; when I shall be alone with my sadness, and my soul is inclined to despair, — oh, how many tears shall I then shed at the memory of our evenings, for happiness is a fine soft rain which penetrates the soul, but flows forth again in abundant tears!

20*th.* — Never have I tasted so intimately and so deeply the joys of family life. Never has that perfume which encircles a pious and happy household enveloped me so completely. It is like a cloud of invisible incense which I breathe unceasingly. All these minute details of family life, which as a whole make up the day, are to me so many gradations of a continuous charm that gradually unfolds itself from one end of the day to the other.

The morning salutation, which renews in a way the pleasure of the first arrival, for the words of greeting are almost the same, and then the nightly parting is a semblance of longer separations, being, like them, full of danger and uncertainty; the breakfast, a repast by which we celebrate the joy of coming together again; the walk which then follows, a sort of salutation and adoration which we render to Nature; our return home and withdrawal into an old wainscoted room looking on the sea and

beyond the reach of household noises, in a word, a true sanctuary of work; the dinner announced, not by the sound of a bell, which recalls too vividly the school or a large establishment, but by a gentle voice; the mirth, the lively pleasantries, the flowing talk, gliding on unceasingly throughout the repast; the crackling fire of dry branches around which we draw our chairs immediately after; the pleasant things said by the warmth of the flames which roar while we talk; and, if the sun be shining, the walk on the borders of the ocean, which sees approaching it a mother, her child in her arms, the father of this child, and a stranger, these last two with stick in hand; the rosy lips of the little girl, who talks to the sound of the waves, and sometimes the tears she sheds and her cries of childish grief by the borders of the sea; our own thoughts as we watch the mother and child smiling upon each other, or the child weeping and the mother seeking to soothe her with the sweetness of her caresses and her voice; the ocean ever rolling in its train of billows and of sounds; the dead branches we cut while walking to and fro in the copse, with which to light a quick, bright fire on our return; this little touch of wood-cutter's work which brings us nearer to Nature and recalls the singular passion

which M. Féli had for the same work; the hours of study and of poetic effusion which bring us to the supper hour; this repast to which we are called by the same gentle voice as at noon, and which is passed amid the same though less brilliant joys, for the evening softens all things, tempers all things; then the evening, which opens with the bright light of a gladsome fire, and from reading to reading, from talk to talk, expires at last in sleep, — to all the charms of such a day add I know not what angelic radiance, what magic spell of peace, of freshness, and of innocence, which emanates from the blond head, the blue eyes, the silvery voice, the laughter, the little airs full of intelligence, of a child who, I feel sure, excites the envy of more than one angel, who delights you, fascinates you, who by the slightest movement of her lips awakens in you the most passionate fondness, so great is the power of weakness; finally, to all this add the dreams of the imagination, and you will still fall far short of realizing the fulness of all these family joys.

21*st.* — For some days the weather has been at its worst. The rain falls, and the wind blows in squalls, but with such fury that it seems as though everything would be swept away by these frightful bursts. For three nights in succession

I have been awakened with a start by one of these squalls, which pass over us regularly at about midnight. They make such a furious assault upon the house that everything within trembles and quakes. I spring halfway up in bed and listen to the passing hurricane, and a thousand thoughts surge up within me which before had slept, some on the surface, others in the very depths of my being.

All the sounds of Nature — the winds, those formidable breaths from an unknown mouth which put into play innumerable instruments scattered over the plains, on the mountains, in the ravines, or massed together in the depths of the forests; the waters, whose voice has a compass of such unbounded extent, from the murmuring of a moss-grown spring to the immeasurable harmonies of the ocean; the thunder, voice of that sea which floats above our heads; the rustling of the dry leaves as the foot of man or a playful breeze passes over them; in fine (for we must indeed close this enumeration which would become endless), this continual outpouring of sounds, this ever-surging uproar of the elements — lead my thoughts to expand in strange reveries and throw me into a state of wonder from which I cannot recover. The voice of Nature has taken such hold upon

me that I rarely succeed in shaking myself free from the habitual preoccupation which it imposes upon me, and to which I try in vain to turn a deaf ear. But to awake at midnight with the shrieks of the tempest, to be assailed in the darkness by a wild and furious harmony which destroys the peaceful dominion of the night, is an incomparable experience in the way of strange impressions; it is the luxury of terror.

MORDREUX, January 2nd, 1834.

On the evening of day before yesterday I closed a letter to Frédéric with the following words: —

"I write you during the last hours of 1833. There is an indescribably solemn sadness in this last agony of the year. My heart is full of strange and rueful thoughts, for the tempest roars without, and the year expires in the convulsions of a dark and stormy night."

I suffered strangely all through that evening. The incredible rapidity of the flight of life, the mystery of our destiny, the terrible questions which doubt brings up at times even to those men who are most firmly grounded in their faith, finally, that condition which often comes upon me, in which the soul, like Lenore, feels itself borne away at full speed toward dreary regions

unknown, — all this had taken deep hold of me. During the same evening I received the confirmation of the news of which we had heard rumours for some days : the defeat of a great man who has surrendered his pen as brave men surrender their sword, with indignation in his heart and tears in his eyes. Poor M. Féli ! you have often pressed me to your bosom, I have breathed your soul, and my timid and unworthy gaze has penetrated the depths of your heart ; for there were days when you became so transparent, so limpid, that one could see into your very depths, as into the clearest spring. Oh, what sorrow takes possession of me when I see you so misunderstood, and suffering so much wrong in return for all the good that you longed to do ! What man could better say to the Lord than you, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up" ? and you have been reputed among those whom Satan sends to bring consternation into the house of the Lord ! [1] . . .

Le Val, January 20th.

I have passed three weeks at Mordreux,[2] in the midst of a household as peaceful, as united,

[1] The end of the page is effaced in the original manuscript, and the two following leaves have been taken out, doubtless by Guérin himself.

[2] With M. de La Villéon, father-in-law of Hippolyte La Morvonnais.

as blest as fancy could picture. And yet, in this tranquillity, in this sweet monotony of family life, my days were full of inward agitation, so much so that I think I never experienced such disquietude of heart and head. A strange emotion took possession of my whole being and drew tears from my eyes for a mere trifle, as it is with little children or old men. At every moment my bosom expanded and my soul overflowed with inward aspirations, with outpourings of tears and of silent words. I felt as if a gentle lassitude were weighing upon my eyes and sometimes fettering all my members. I no longer ate excepting with reluctance, although my appetite urged me on; for I was pursuing thoughts which so intoxicated me with their sweetness, and the happiness of my soul imparted such serenity to my body, that it revolted from an act which would degrade it from such exalted rapture. I strove to resist this perilous exaltation, this rush of feeling, of which I realized the danger; but I was too completely a victim to save myself, and to all appearances I should have been wholly lost had I not found a powerful diversion in the contemplation of Nature. I began to observe her still more attentively than usual, and by degrees the tumult within me subsided; for out of the fields, the

waters, and the woods came a sweet and beneficent virtue which penetrated me and changed all my transports into melancholy dreams. This mingling of the calm impressions of Nature with the stormy reveries of the heart produced a state of the soul which I would long wish to retain, for it well befits a restless dreamer like myself. It is like a temperate and tranquil ecstasy which transports the soul outside of itself without depriving it of the consciousness of a permanent and somewhat tumultuous sadness. The soul also becomes insensibly filled with a languor which deadens all the activity of the intellectual faculties, and lulls it into a half-sleep, void of all thought, in which it still feels the power to dream of the most beautiful things. At other times it is as if a softly tinted cloud were spread over the soul and threw that sweet shadow which invites to contemplation and repose. The disquietudes, the passions, all the turbulent crowd whose uproar is heard in the inner city become silent, sometimes have recourse to prayer, and always end by settling down to rest. Nothing can more faithfully represent this state of the soul than the shades of evening falling at this very moment. Gray clouds just edged with silver cover the whole face of the sky. The sun, which set but a few

moments ago, has left behind light enough to temper for a while the black shadows, and to soften in a measure the fall of night. The winds are hushed, and the peaceful ocean, as I come to listen on the threshold of the door, sends me only a melodious murmur which softly spreads over the soul like a beautiful wave over the beach. The birds, the first to feel the influence of the night, fly toward the woods, and their wings rustle in the clouds. The coppice, which covers the entire slope of the hill of Le Val, and resounds all day long with the chirp of the wren, the gay whistle of the woodpecker, and the various notes of a multitude of birds, has no more a sound along its paths or within its thickets, unless it be the shrill call of the blackbirds as they play together and chase one another, after the other birds have hidden their heads under their wings. The noise of men, always the last to become silent, gradually dies away over the face of the fields. The general uproar ceases, and not a sound is heard except from the towns and hamlets, where, far into the night, the children cry and the dogs bark. Silence inwraps me; all things yearn for rest, except my pen, which disturbs, perchance, the slumber of some living atom asleep in the folds of my notebook, for it makes its little

sound as it writes these idle thoughts. Then let it cease; for what I write, have written, and shall write, will never be worth the sleep of a single atom.

Ten o'clock in the evening.—My last walk, my last visit to the sea, to the shore, to all this magnificent scenery which for two months has so enchanted me. Winter smiles upon us with all the grace of Spring, and gives us days which make the birds sing and the verdure start upon the rose-bushes in the gardens, and the sweet-brier in the woods, and the honeysuckles which climb along the walls and rocks. At two o'clock we took the path which winds so gracefully among the flowering gorse and the rough verdure of the cliffs, then skirts along the wheat-fields, bends toward the ravines, steals between the hedges, and fearlessly climbs toward the loftiest rocks. The object of our walk was a promontory which overlooks the bay of Quatre-Vaux. The sea shone in all its brilliancy, and broke, a hundred feet below us, with sounds which passed through our souls as they mounted to the sky. Toward the horizon some fishermen's boats spread out against the azure their sails of dazzling whiteness, and our gaze passed alternately from this small fleet to one more numerous that floated near by to the sound of

songs. It was an innumerable flock of sea-birds gayly fishing, and delighting our eyes by the brilliancy of their plumage and the grace with which they sat the waves. These birds, these sails, the beauty of the day, the universal serenity, gave a festive air to the ocean, and filled my soul with joyous enthusiasm, in spite of the background of sad thoughts which I had brought with me to our promontory. Still I became intently absorbed in the contemplation of the headlands, the rocks, and the islands, striving to take an impression of them and transfer it to my soul. On my return I trod religiously, and with regret at every step, this path which has so often led me to such beautiful meditations in such sweet companionship. This path is so full of charm as it reaches the copse and stretches out between hazel-trees which tower high above it and a boxwood hedge which grows unchecked in shaggy masses! There, the joy which Nature had imparted to me died away, and I was seized with the melancholy of parting. To-morrow this sea, these shores, these woods, all the delights which I have tasted here, will become for me a dream, a shadowy remembrance which I shall contemplate with a different feeling. And that I might carry away with me all that I could from these sweet spots, and as though it were in their

power to give themselves to me, I inwardly implored them to engrave themselves upon my soul, to give me something from their very selves that should not pass away. In the mean time I pushed aside the branches of the box-trees, the bushes, and the dense thickets, and buried my head in their depths to inhale the wild fragrance which they hold within, to penetrate their hidden life, and to speak, as it were, to their very hearts.

The evening was spent as usual in talks and readings. We recalled the happiness of the days just past. I have outlined a feeble picture of it in this notebook; we looked back upon it sadly as upon the picture of one of the dearest and sweetest of our departed ones.

Hippolyte has gone to rest. I am writing this in the solitude and stillness of the night, by the side of an expiring fire. I have been listening at the door to the sounds from without. They are but few. The ocean has retreated far away; he is at peace; he sleeps; he makes no sound. The Arguenon flows freely over the strands; the moon rides on its waves; and from the fords, where the waters foam, I hear a gentle murmur. The breeze barely sighs in the woods, and all else is at rest.

Farewell, farewell, beloved abode! if thou

lovest me and if thou doubtest my constancy, listen to this and be reassured: I lose the half of my soul in losing solitude. I enter into the world with secret horror.

CAEN, January 24th.

I have just been wandering through some streets of this city by the light of a few pale street lamps. What have I seen? The black phantoms of churches and their bell-towers, of which I could discern only the general masses; but the mystery of night which envelops them and which does not define their proportions as would the light of day, adds to their religiousness and has filled me with a sentiment which is better, I believe, than that of forms. My thought rose indefinitely toward the sky with those spires which seemed never to end, and roamed with terror around those naves as gloomy as the tomb. This is all. There was a crowd in the streets; but what signifies a crowd at night, and even by day? At night I love better the sound of the winds, and by day those great congregations, now silent, now sounding, which we call forests. Moreover, I met with some of those men who always make me turn and fly quickly home, — students who move along proudly sporting their costume, and breathe

from every feature an indescribable expression which intimidates me and puts me to flight. O my notebook! my sweet friend, how I felt that I loved thee as I escaped from this throng! So here I am with thee, although the night is far spent and I am all exhausted with fatigue, — wholly with thee to tell thee of my troubles and quietly to hold converse with thee in secret. Can I too often recall those memories still steeped with my tears and which will forever remain incorruptible in my soul? That good Hippolyte and his adorable Marie! I had bidden her farewell; she had answered me with a few words of the most touching kindness; I had stammered out a few more words and had started to descend the stairs rapidly, thinking that she had not crossed the threshold of the door, and that all was over, when I heard a new farewell which came to me from above; I raised my head and saw her bending over the railing. I answered feebly, very feebly, for her voice had exhausted what little strength I had left to restrain my tears. . . .

PARIS, February 1st.

My God, close my eyes; keep me from seeing all this multitude, the sight of which stirs up within me such bitter, such discouraging thoughts!

Grant that, as I pass through it, I may be deaf to the noise, insensible to those impressions which crush me as I move among the crowd; and, for this, place before my eyes an image, a vision of things I love, a field, a valley, a moor, Cayla, Le Val, some object of Nature. I will walk with my gaze fixed upon these sweet forms, and shall thus pass on undisturbed.

17th.—O purity of the fields! Unceasingly did I go on rising from Nature to God, and descending again from God to Nature. Such was my inward life, mingled with some melancholy, with a few heart-thrills, which did but delay or quicken the course of my thoughts without changing them. Nought that was sullied entered into my soul, and I felt the power of my intellect increasing; for, when the inner man is pure, his thought rises without hindrance and ever goes on approaching nearer to the source of all intellectual strength. I was beginning to rise above my discouragement and to acquire that beautiful and noble confidence of a heart which feels itself to be the friend of God, and which could not fall so long as it rested in this consciousness.

March 16th.—Something very strange is now going on within me. It has perhaps never before happened to me to receive stronger proofs of my

intellectual incapacity than during these last weeks, and I go on my way as though it were not so; I write undauntedly a quantity of articles which are printed in a small journal, by what miracle I know not. In truth, I do not know which should be most admired, whether the excess of goodness on the part of the men who receive such poor attempts, or my incredible assurance in thrusting such nonsense upon the world. Whence comes this extraordinary boldness? I am willing to confess to myself the motive which inspires it; it is pure, it is praiseworthy, and it so rarely happens that I can look at one of my thoughts face to face without having to lower my eyes, that I must here record the one which gives me such unusual energy. I work solely for my father and for my friends; all my strength is in them; and it is not I who work, but they who work in me. It is true that for three years it was lost labour for them to have excited and urged me on, and that this should have been enough to make me die of shame and remorse, were my soul capable of experiencing in any high degree a sentiment like that of repentance.

23rd.—Let me now hasten to note down here as far as possible the ecstasies of this day; let me hasten to write that on this day I have been

happy with the most sublime joy, — the joy of a man who has had a glimpse of the raptures of heaven, that I have felt myself strong for good and full of the love of God and of men. Yes, I must hasten to write it, for these noble exaltations last but for a moment in my soul, for to-morrow[1] . . .

It seems to me intolerable to appear before men other than one does before God. My severest torture at this moment is the over-esteem which noble souls have for me. It is said that at the Last Judgment the secret of all consciences will be revealed to the whole universe; I wish that this could happen to me this very day, and that my soul could be open for all to see.

April 20th. — O my notebook, for me thou art not a mass of paper, something insensible, inanimate; no, thou art living, thou hast a soul, an intellect, love, goodness, compassion, patience, charity, sympathy pure and unalterable. I find in thee that which I have not found among men, — a tender and devoted being who becomes attached to a soul weak and morbid, who encircles it with affection, who alone understands its language, divines its heart, compassionates its sadness, is intoxicated with its joys,

[1] There is a lacuna in the manuscript: a leaf is wanting.

makes it rest upon his bosom or leans upon it himself at times to rest in his turn ; for it is giving great consolation to the one we love to lean on him for sleep or rest. It is such a love as this that I need, — one full of compassion. For in me there is nothing which can awaken that love so often seen in this world, — a love between equals, between souls that are alike, souls that are drawn together because each sees the other to be noble and beautiful, as if two stars, having caught sight of each other from the two ends of heaven, were to cross all space in order to come together. To be loved as I am, I should need to meet a soul willing to stoop to its inferior, a strong soul which would bow the knee before the weaker, not to adore it, but to serve, console, and watch over it as one would over the sick, — in fine, a soul endowed with a sensibility humble as well as profound, which should so far divest itself of that pride so natural even to love as to bury its heart in an obscure affection, of which the world would understand nothing ; to consecrate itself to a feeble, languishing, and wholly introspective being ; to be willing to concentrate all its rays upon a flower without splendor, frail and trembling, which would indeed yield it those perfumes whose sweetness charms and penetrates, but never those

which intoxicate and exalt to the blissful folly of ecstasy.

May 1st. — Forever a burden, forever obliged to borrow my sustenance. The lips of the new-born babe have strength enough to suck the mother's breast, and I, in all the vigour of youth, have not sufficient energy to earn my own livelihood, to draw in enough to sustain life.

7th. — Gentle rain. Not a breath in the air. The rain fell peacefully with a monotony not devoid of charm. The foliage bent beneath the water's weight, and each drop as it struck the leaves gave them a gentle oscillation which was endlessly repeated. It was as if a general tremor had seized upon the green groves, a thrill of joy and rapture. The air, impregnated with a warm humidity, and heavy with all the perfumes of May, filled one with languor, and was almost cloying in its softness and sultry fragrance.

At present all my communings with Nature, that other consoler of the afflicted, take place in a little garden of the Rue d'Anjou-Saint-Honoré, very near the Rue de la Pépinière. Day before yesterday evening I had passed my arm around a lilac-tree, and was singing in an undertone, *Que le jour me dure*, by J. J. This touching and melancholy air, my attitude, the calm of the evening, and, more than all, this habit that my

soul has of rehearsing at eventide all its sorrows, of burying itself in pale shadows toward the close of day, filled me with a deep, heartfelt, boundless sense of my misery, of my inward poverty. I saw myself poor, miserably poor, pitiable and wholly incapable of a future. At the same time, high above my head and far away, I seemed to hear the murmur of that world of thought and poetry to which I so often aspire, but which I am never able to attain. I thought of those of my own age whose wings are strong enough to reach it ; but I did so without jealousy, and as we here below contemplate the elect and their felicity. But my soul burned, panted, struggled against its powerlessness. It felt something of the despair and the vain transports which those unfortunates feel who can only dream of love, and in their dreams press a burning phantom with frenzy to their breast. The trunk of the lilac, which I clasped, quivered beneath my touch ; I thought I felt it move spontaneously, and the fluttering of its leaves made a sweet sound which to me seemed like a language, like the murmur of lips whispering words of consolation. O my lilac, at that moment I embraced thee as the sole being in this world upon whom I could lean my faltering nature, as the only one capable of enduring an

embrace from me, and sufficiently compassionate to become the support of my misery! How did I repay thee? With a few tears which fell upon thy roots.

18*th.* — My internal wretchedness increases; I no longer dare to look within.

25*th.* — I shall doubtless be blamed; but how is it possible for me to express other than what I feel? Experiences are accumulating; that is but too evident. I have now no refuge but in resignation. I well foresaw, when I placed my foot upon the lowest step of my strivings and my endeavours, that, after having attempted everything, I should consider myself fortunate at finding, not a modest abode where I could install myself and breathe at my ease, but a little covert in which I might crouch down and lie hidden until the end. My prevision has been fully realized; I have now no further refuge than in resignation, and in headlong haste I flee to it, all trembling and bewildered. Resignation is like the burrow dug beneath the roots of an old oak or in the crevice of some rock which gives shelter to the fleeing and long-pursued prey. Rapidly does it dart through the dark and narrow opening, cower at the very bottom, and there, crouching down and all drawn together, it listens with palpitating heart to the distant baying of the hounds and to

the hunters' cries. And here am I in my burrow. But when the danger has passed, the prey again takes to the fields and returns to look upon the sun and liberty; all rejoicing, it comes back to its carpet of wild thyme and savoury herbs, which it had left but half browsed, and again takes up the habits of its wild and roving life. The grains and vines, the copses, thickets, and flowers, its bed in a tuft of grass or amid the moss beneath the dense bushes, its naps, its dreams, its vague and sweet existence, — all this is again restored to it; while I, so long hunted down, shall never again be free, but shall forever remain imprisoned within my subterranean dwelling. Ought I to complain? Why should I? In the depths of my hiding-place I find security, a certain measure of peace, and sufficient range for the limited evolutions of my soul. A ray of soft and subtile light glides within my dwelling and sheds about as much brightness as it would in the cell of a bee. So long as the wind wafts me from time to time whiffs of wild fragrance, and my ear catches distant accents of the melodies of Nature, what shall I have to regret? Does the spider, which at evening-tide hangs suspended on its thread between two leaves, concern itself with the flight of the eagle and the pinions of the birds? And does the

imagination of the bird. as it broods over its nestlings well-sheltered beneath some bush, regret the caprices of its liberty and the soft undulations of its flight through the airy heights? Never have I had the freedom of the bird, nor has my thought ever been as happy as its wings; then let us fall asleep in resignation, as does the bird in its nest.

26*th.* — Why do I make myself uneasy by forever asking, What shall I do with my life? I have devoted myself to many things, but have succeeded in none; with a semblance of aptitude, I remain useless, and I suffer in a position almost without resources. But who knows if, all superfluous as I seem to be in the world, God does not extract from me some good of which I am unaware; if, unknown to me, He has not endowed me with some virtue, some hidden influence for the good of men? In the future, every time that I am pursued by the fatal thought of my uselessness and powerlessness, I shall take refuge in this other thought: that Providence puts me to some use and makes me serve some hidden purpose, requiring from me only my consent and my faith in this mission which It has not wished to reveal to me. By this acquiescence of my will, I fertilize the imperceptible good which I accomplish, I sow in

it the seeds of merits which will secretly sprout and blossom into celestial rewards in the fields of a better world. The paths which lead the creatures of this earth to heaven are not all alike, — some seem to wander strangely, although in the end they arrive at the common centre; each one has its turnings, its angles, its mysterious labyrinths. Among all the paths which men follow, perhaps a larger number than we are accustomed to think lead to heaven; but I am convinced that all are difficult. However that may be, I go forward on my own, which is very dark, with full confidence. This constant thought, that I am ignorant of the good work for which I am destined by the Lord, will incline me to respect all creatures, to bow before all beings, to conduct myself upon the earth as in a temple where all things fulfil a sacred ministry, where the atoms of dust are so many Levites whose innumerable legions prostrate themselves and pray in the chinks of the pavement.

June 10th. — When I begin on a subject, my self-love imagines that I am doing wonders; and when I have finished, I see nothing but a wretched patchwork composed of the remnants of colours scraped from the palettes of others, and crudely mixed on my own. But, after all, why should I ceaselessly torment myself with

this thought? I do my best, I go as far as I can; and to the Devil with *What will they say of it!* This philosophy is of recent date. During the last eight days I have made great progress in abnegation, in resignation, in the renunciation of all high thought. I have withdrawn into my poor little shell, and strive to settle myself in it as best I can, with the resolution never again to come out of it. I defy my imagination, which, like the tortoise, wanted to travel through the air; I insult at pleasure my pretentions, although they are timid, and they burst with vexation; I take delight in scoffing at the proud *ego* which vainly kicks against the sting of inward sarcasm; I bite myself as does the scorpion in the fire, to cut short the agony.

13*th.* — And am I not a mockery, a plaything, something which little children pursue with their jeers, a being before whom the feeblest hold up their heads, whom the foot of a boy of ten can crush, without its being able even to turn like the worm under the wheel? All the children whom I meet have, as it were, an instinct by which they divine the imbecility of my character, and at once they treat me as the master would the slave; their first idea, as soon as I come in sight, is to make sport of me, to torment me with the sarcastic *naïveté* of their age. I bear

them no ill-will ; it is in their nature to make use for their own enjoyment of everything that is weaker than their feeble hands.

LE PARC (EURE-ET-LOIRE), June 25th.

How can I express what I have felt on once again burying myself in solitude, and in a solitude which reminds me of the country of my sweetest dreams, Brittany? For this region falls off very much toward the west ; and one inhales here, as it were, emanations from the good country. In appearance the fields are very much the same : there are hollows covered with verdure, paths by the side of the wheat-fields, hedges, enclosures of furze, of broom, and of stunted oaks ; they make excellent butter here, and cider flows abundantly. I rejoice in this resemblance ; I give myself up to studying it ; I revive a multitude of charming memories which, to my mind, is one of the soul's sweetest pastimes. But restless thought does not fall asleep ; it goads me and keeps me forever on the alert, but its annoyances are now less active and less tormenting. Relieved from a weight of material anxieties, which stifled me, my fancies soar more freely ; but what matters it? They are always full of misgivings, doubts, and perplexities ; only to seek them, I go higher and into a more vague and less material order of

things. They are chimeras of the future which appear and vanish, inquiries into my destiny, beautiful hopes, and misgivings, — a strange combination of all the thoughts which can be awakened in a mind unproductive but always restless, in an imagination which alternately believes and does not believe in itself, which chastises and caresses itself, which welcomes all fancies, all impressions, without adhering to any, and goes on forever asking for something new. When, then, shall I subdue it, and when shall I attain to pure and simple reason? Could I yield to the wise counsels which come to me from all sides, I would pack up all this baggage of vain thoughts, and despoiled of all fancies, but at rest, I would follow in the footsteps of other men.

26th. — The sweetest hospitality, the seclusion of Nature, to which I freely resort, the absence of all constraint, of all subjection, the realization of that half-savage, half-social happiness of which I dreamed with so much eagerness at Paris in my dark and stifling chamber, — all these good things I possess, and yet I cannot wholly abandon myself to their enjoyment. I fancied to myself that as soon as I were here I should fall into the half-slumber of an equable, free, and natural life; but how little do I know myself if I hope

ever to taste complete rest and be lulled to sleep by the sweet sound of that harmony which we hear within us when all parts of the soul are in unison. My faculties, intellectual as well as moral, have too many inequalities ever to attain an equilibrium. Here I am sheltered from all external shocks. Withdrawn from social tumult, out of reach of those blows which bruise me, irritate me, or utterly crush me while I live in the very midst of the world, good order would be re-established within me, if society were the only source of my ills. She is responsible for a large portion of them, — I recognize this in the great feeling of deliverance I experience every time I turn away from her; but to the nature of my soul a large share is also due, as solitude proves to me as soon as I return to her. For then certain anxious and restless faculties awake, and, to torment me, bring back to life the capacity for bitter suffering, heart-burnings, pent-up vexations, dull anger, all of which subside and fall asleep under the powerful spell of the country. The host of caressing sensations which solitude brings, the animating and penetrating influences of nature, soothe and delight the surface of my soul; but on entering within, they become irritants which increase the power of the visionary and restless faculties.

"They are also to the weary and aching soul what the morning dew is to the flowers half-withered by the heat of the previous day: it revives and refreshes them, but often only to yield them, more sensitive than ever, to the burning heat of the mid-day sun." (O. L. V.)

July 16th. — I am beginning to observe within me something which mitigates in part my inward sufferings, and which may perhaps end by raising me in my own eyes; it is the progress of my soul in the love and the comprehension of liberty. It was in 1831 that my heart first thrilled at this word. Until that time the weak and backward character of my soul had left me insensible to and ignorant of the delights of liberty. But its manhood finally declared itself; and the first aspirations of this active and powerful faculty were directed toward this virgin. She moved my soul at twenty-one, as a young girl had troubled my heart at fourteen, with sensations which were wholly novel, confused, and full of delicious agitation. During two years and a half of my life I have been limited to the timid and vague reveries of a first love which knows not itself and is satisfied with little; but for some months past I have experienced violent transports of the soul, and from time to time there come to me, as it were,

flushes of a powerful and intoxicating heat which permeate my very being. Careless and uncertain fancies take form and become active ; insensibly they are transformed into strong, full thoughts. As many wavering and lukewarm desires as I once had, just so many ardent longings I now possess. Instinct has become passion.

I have reached a critical period of my inward life. By a strange commotion in my ideas, by the almost sudden development of many of my faculties, by a quickening in the movement of my inner life, I recognize the approach of a revolution which for a long time I have been craving. Until now I have left the guidance of my faculties to caprice and to chance. To me they seemed so weak and of so little promise that I judged them unworthy of other masters ; but they have undeceived me. These pale and puny children have taken on vigour and colour ; their irresolute and timid constitution has become emboldened, and by a quick and sudden bound it has freed itself from the languors of its long childhood. I must think of their destiny : this internal revolution is necessary ; I am about to embrace an active life and bid farewell to my beloved indifference, sweet companion of my childhood and my youth. Alas ! it will not be

without tears in my eyes. I am, then, at last to seriously exercise my faculties ; and it will be under the inspiration and the fire of that thought which, burning like a passion, fills my soul, — the thought of liberty ; that is to say, of the greatest happiness and the greatest progress of humanity. I shall be nothing more than an ant bringing a straw toward the construction of the future ; but, however small may be my powers, they will none the less be animated by a broad and holy thought which will never allow the soul wherein it dwells to yield, which purifies and expands it and is sufficient to its happiness, — a thought which we all have and of which every one is proud ; the thought which impels the century before it, the most beautiful and the most powerful after that of God, the thought of liberty.

When I go out for a walk, well disposed, and free from care, at the very first step I feel, springing up from the depths of my soul, an unwonted joy, full of wondrous life and activity. As I get farther into the country this joy increases and expands, sometimes rapidly, sometimes slowly, according to the incidents of the way and the length of time it takes to arrive at the most beautiful spot in my walk. As soon as I have reached it, and have placed myself to

my liking, and always so as to receive a lively impression from all sides of the horizon which surrounds me, this increasing feeling of ineffable delight reaches its fulness, spreads through my whole being, and fills it to overflowing.

August 4th. — Paris is again to hold sway over me ; but I am now stronger, more courageous, and in every way in a better condition to sustain the burden of life. During the six weeks that I have spent here, without study, without effort, allowing my soul to drift along at its pleasure, living as an idler, but as a contemplative idler and one open to all impressions, I have greatly developed. What does my intelligence need wherewith to enrich itself and acquire greater expansion? Books? persevering labour? profound investigations in science? No! A free life ; a country which envelops me in verdure and in genial exhalations ; walks, sometimes eager and hurried, sometimes easy and languid ; and all the light, the clouds, the ravishing sounds, the universal rapture that encompass a man who spends whole days leaning against a tree and occupied solely with watching Nature live. My intelligence found itself placed under these conditions ; and its natural sap, warmed by the potent atmosphere which surrounded it, sprang up like a fountain.

Many clouds have been detaching themselves from the mass of darkness which weighs upon my soul, and which only recently has been disturbed by the tardy breath of my intelligence. Each day I lighten myself of some prejudice. The love of liberty is taking possession of my character, and is beginning to establish there a solid and rational independence which inwardly strengthens me and gives me force to resist the rough shocks of that marvellously ordered and regulated battle-array called society. I am about to plunge into the fight, and do not know whom I shall run against ; but I am very sure that bruises and wounds will be showered upon me. What matters it ? A nothing disconcerts me ; a breath overthrows me ; a child is master of my timidity. What, then, will happen when I find my existence tied to men all bristling with prejudices, proud and imperious in their servile opinions, vain, inflated, and with hands always ready to fetter the feeble ? They will trouble my timid nature ; they will cause me horrible suffering through the weak and defenceless side of my soul ; but their darts will not wound me elsewhere. While, misled by appearances, they will account me vanquished, my soul, in the hidden temple of freedom, will press to her heart her generous and independent opinions, her faith

freed from the slender chains with which so many minds are wont to fetter it, and will say: "Thrust aside these men and their sayings, and steep thyself in the memory of those days of independence when thou didst wander at will over the country, thy heart swelling with rapture, and singing at the top of thy voice hymns to liberty, or when thou didst enjoy a day of idleness from beginning to end, from the gay breezes of the morning to the warm fragrance of the evening, lying under a pear-tree, heedless of all things, and setting at defiance, in thy contemptuous indolence, the tyrants of all kinds fastened on the human race like vultures."

PARIS, August 20th.

To quit solitude for the crowd, green and unfrequented paths for thronged and noisy streets, through which the only breeze that circulates is the hot and tainted breath of humanity; to pass from quietism to turbulent life, and from the vague mysteries of Nature to the harsh realities of society, — has always been for me a terrible exchange, a return toward evil and misfortune. According as I discern more clearly the true and the false in society, my inclination to live, not as a wild man or a misanthrope, but as a man of solitude on the borders of society, on the out-

skirts of the world, has become strengthened and expanded. The birds flutter and peck about, they build their nests around our dwellings, they are like fellow-citizens of the farms and hamlets ; but they fly through the boundless sky ; the hand of God alone distributes and measures out to them their daily food ; they build their nests in the heart of the thickets or hang them on the tops of the trees. Even thus I would wish to live, roving around the outskirts of society, and having always behind me a field of liberty as vast as the sky. If my faculties are not yet formed ; if it be true that they have not attained their full growth, — they will not reach their maturity except in the open air and in a somewhat wild environment. My last sojourn in the country redoubled my conviction on this point.

I have idled away my six weeks of holiday in the most complete inaction. Lying under a tree, to break the uniformity of the *far niente*, hardly did I follow some careless reading, and far more than half my attention was distracted by a breeze or by a bird skimming through the woods, by the song of a blackbird or a skylark, or whatever it might be, — by all the vague and bewitching things which pass through the air as they appear to one lying on the fresh

grass, under the shade of a tree, in the midst of a Nature intoxicated with life and sunshine. But this repose, this lull, had not extinguished the play of my faculties, nor arrested the mysterious circulation of thought in the most active portions of my soul. I was like a man bound by magnetic sleep: his eyes are closed, his body is relaxed, all his senses are passive; but, beneath this veil which covers almost all the phenomena of physical life, his soul is far more alive than when in a state of wakefulness and natural activity: it pierces through dense darkness, beyond which it sees certain mysteries laid bare before its eyes, or enjoys the sweetest visions; it holds converse with spirits, and the gates of a marvellous world are opened to it. I tasted simultaneously two raptures, of which one alone would have been enough to fill and more than fill my whole being, yet both found a place there and expanded freely without contention or confusion. I enjoyed both at the same time, and also each one by itself, as distinctly as though I possessed but one, — no confusion, no mingling, no modification of the vitality of one by the activity of the other. The first consisted in the inexpressible feeling of complete and unbroken repose resembling sleep; the second came from the progressive, harmonious, slowly cadenced movement

of the innermost faculties of my soul, as they expanded in a world of fancies and of thought; and this I felt to be a kind of vision, in vague and fleeting shadows, of the most secret beauties of Nature and of her divine forces. When the hour of departure broke the spell, and I once more laid hold upon the habitual consciousness of my being, I again found myself poor and wretched as before; but by the livelier movement of my thoughts, by a more subtile delicacy of sensation, by a marked growth in my moral and intellectual powers, I recognized that my six weeks of idleness had not been lost, that the wave of strange visions which had flooded my soul had raised it and borne it higher. I returned to society filled with this joy; but it was fully offset and almost subdued by the sadness of my heart, which was filled with regrets and languor. I tore myself away from the country as from a sweetheart; and I confess that I cannot explain to myself the wonderful likeness there is between the sadness with which it filled me and that of love.

22*nd*.—I have received a letter from Onésime; on opening it, a perfume of flowers and of the country exhaled from all its folds. I at first thought that he had enclosed within it one of those breezes which hover all day over the

meadows and the gardens ; but I soon changed my mind, when, on turning the page, I scattered over the floor blue and yellow petals, rose-leaves and blades of grass. There were other people in the room. I blushed ; I was all abashed ; I thought they were about to question me, perhaps rally me on what gave me so much pleasure. I should not have known what to reply ; I should have stammered and have been at a loss for words. And then, besides, how could one make strangers appreciate the value of a blade of grass in a letter, the charm of these touching childish things, of these exquisite simplicities ? Happily no one noticed it ; they were chatting. I let them alone and hastened to gather up my treasure furtively like a thief. Society, such as it has become, has so changed men, and destroyed in them the ingenuous instincts of the soul, that those who have escaped the general contagion and preserved in its virginity the simplicity of primitive tastes are compelled to hide themselves, to steal away, to envelop themselves in a sort of modesty.

26*th.* — My soul contracts and curls up like a leaf touched by the cold ; it falls back upon its centre ; it has abandoned all the positions from which it held survey. After a few days of struggle with social realities, it has been obliged

to beat a retreat and retire under cover. I am now circumscribed and blockaded until the moment when my thought, swollen by a fresh inundation, shall overflow the dike and spread freely over its banks. I know of few internal mishaps so perilous for me as this sudden contraction of my being after an extreme expansion. When thus circumscribed, the most active faculties, the most restless and stirring elements, find themselves taken captive and condemned to inaction, but without paralysis, without diminution of life ; with them, all their impetuosity is shut in and restrained. Pressed and crowded together, they struggle among themselves, and all together against their common barrier. At such a time all my consciousness of life is reduced to a dull and deep irritation mingled with struggles : it is the fermentation of many different elements which become excited and exasperated in their forced contact, and make repeated attempts to break forth. All the faculties which placed me in communication with the outside world, with the far-away, those brilliant and faithful messengers of the soul which go and come continually from the soul to Nature and from Nature to the soul, are immured within me, so that I remain isolated, and cut off from all participation in the universal life. I am becoming like an infirm man who has

lost the use of all his senses, solitary and excommunicated from Nature.

September 7th. — I waste myself in conversation. Most often I reap from it only despondency and bitterness. In it I compromise my inward life, everything that is best in me. To feed the conversation, I throw into it my favourite thoughts, those which I love the most secretly and with the greatest solicitude. My timid and embarrassed speech disfigures them, mutilates them, and thrusts them into broad daylight, disorderly, confused, and half-naked. When I leave, I gather together and clasp my scattered treasure ; but I replace within me only visions bruised like fruit fallen from the tree onto stony ground.

9th. — At this moment there is a medley in my soul, — a mixture of bitterness and sweetness, a confusion of honey and gall, a strange pell-mell. For several days my mind, already lawless, has been filled with a restless and burning inconstancy which makes it come and go from pole to pole, never lets it alight or rest in the midst of any order of ideas or beliefs, but carries it rapidly along from region to region, and lowers it, as it passes, over every abyss. I experience strange rapture in feeling my soul caught up like that prophet whom an angel bore

away by the hair, and, like him, traversing boundless space with frightful speed. But what is the result of these lawless journeys? Lassitude, bewilderment, increased confusion; and still, at the bottom of all this, my self-love was filled with secret satisfaction, and gloried in the fiery journey, secretly exciting the growing passion of my soul for these perilous adventures. In the country also, during those days of idleness, the ravisher came to bear away my soul; together they went far, far away, but with a more tempered flight, and through regions more serene, though equally vague and undulating. As to-day, my soul on its return was lost in confusion and uncertainty, but there was less agitation and anxious pre-occupation in its perplexity.

19*th*. — O truth! dost thou not appear to me at times like a luminous phantom behind a cloud? But the first wind dissipates thee. Might it be that thou art merely an illusion of the eyes of the soul? Reason and faith! when these two words shall form but one, the enigma of the world will be solved. While waiting, what is to be done? At the hour I write, the sky is magnificent, Nature breathes fresh breezes, full of life, the world rolls on melodiously, and among all these harmonies there circulates something

of sadness and dismay, — the mind of man, troubling itself about all this system which it does not understand.

21*st.* — After all, what is the problem here below? To live a useful life. This being granted, of what account is the instrument which God places in our hands to utilize the time, whether it be a pen or a hammer? To accept without hesitation every condition for which the powers of my mind or my hands are sufficient, such is the resolve to which my soul clings, seeing that everything around it is vanishing and drifting away, that the earth is crumbling beneath its feet. But can I count upon one of my soul's resolves? Who will assure me of its constancy after a thousand changes, after a thousand projects attempted, abandoned, and taken up again? I elude my own self; my sluggish and indifferent will loses breath in the pursuit of my soul, which takes the wings of the lightest fancies, of the most fleeting illusions. Such is my life, — it is made up of serious projects ever changing, and of permanent but idle dreams, of long intoxications of the fancy, and of absurd contests between my will and my soul, which is independent, and as light in flight as a wild creature; while in the most sensitive and hidden depths of my being, there is always acute suffering or

dull discomfort, according as the disorder increases or diminishes.

26th. — I accept with a passive resignation the recoil of those hopes which were once sent forth and now come back to me. I am beginning to trouble myself very little about the outward progress of my life and the greater or less amount of pleasure which I shall meet on my way. When I have bread according to my hunger, and water to my thirst, I should, more than others, be satisfied and silent. An idle and wholly superfluous member of society, I have no right, in the general distribution, to more than the portion strictly necessary for the support of my life.

28th. — Everything is becoming confused within and without. A boundless chaos, Nature, men, science, the totality of things rolls its waves against a point isolated like a reef in the sea, — my soul, lost in the foam and the turmoil. . . . I sustain the assault of boundless waters; how long shall I stand firm? If I am swallowed up in your bosom, mysterious waves, will it happen to me as to those knights who, when dragged down to the bottom of the lakes, found there marvellous palaces, or shall I, like that fisherman of the fable, in falling into the sea, become a god?

Hitherto I have doubted myself, — I who am this imperceptible point. The doubt which covered this imperceptible point has broken through its boundaries, and now overspreads the world; an atom has expanded over the entire universe. Then I suffered only in myself, now I suffer in all things.

29*th.* — The germinating grain puts forth life in two contrary directions: the plumule shoots upward, the radicle downward. I would like to be the insect which dwells and lives in the radicle. I would station myself at the furthermost point of the roots, and there I would contemplate the powerful action of the pores which draw in the life; I would watch the life passing from the bosom of the fruitful molecule into the pores which, like so many mouths, arouse and attract it with melodious calls. I would be a witness of the ineffable love with which it rushes toward the being that calls it, and of the joy of this being. I would be present at their embraces.

October 22*nd.* — For three weeks, outside work which devours all my days to the last crumb; revolution in my habits; a sudden transition from the heedlessness of dreams to the breathlessness of action. All this bustle of a busy life absorbs a certain portion of my thought;

but it is that unsettled portion which I give over to every wind, like the folds of a mantle. I feel no regret for this. It is like the waves which flow over the beach, — the sand absorbs them, man gathers booty from them, the sea gives them up to all who want them. Thus the outskirts of my thought are absorbed by the cares and anxieties of active life ; but in its integrity nothing touches it, no one draws from it, nothing escapes from its waves, except through the continual evaporation of its waters drawn up by an unknown power.

November 23rd. — Two months of action, of participation in human toil. But in bending over my work, in digging the furrow wherein I have just sown my first labours, I experienced only physical weariness. My soul returns from its day's work with all the freshness of its first awaking. It is not very long since it shuddered and fainted whenever the thought of an outward action to be accomplished passed before it. If at the moment when necessity forced me into the conflict of active life, scourging me on like those soldiers of the East who were driven to battle by the lash of the whip, — if, I say, at that moment my soul had stooped sufficiently earthward to have been near the scene of action, it would have been stricken to the ground. Hap-

pily, shortly before this time, it had started upon a course which is carrying it far away from the battlefields of action. This departure was not sudden or unexpected ; it had been heralded by breaths which moved my soul from time to time like the first freshness of a breeze. It started out just in time ; it is now out of danger. Joyous, like those captives who ply their oars, flying from a barbarous coast, it plunges forward in rapturous flight, it seeks places unknown to all and to itself, but is sure of reaching them, for they lure it on, and as it presses onward it is encouraged by an infallible presentiment of the marvels which they are holding in reserve.

December 10th. — Of what, then, is my nature made, that new conditions, for which I can in no wise make ready, are ever taking me by surprise ; that at every moment some new weakness betrays itself on a side where I had felt no disquietude ? To-day this poor imagination of mine, through which I habitually live, and whence flow all the unknown joys and hidden transports that circulate within me, no part of which goes forth to be lost in the outside world, — this poor imagination has become exhausted. It is now eight days since my inner life has begun to ebb, since the stream has subsided, so visibly reduced that after a few rounds of the sun it be-

came but a thread of water. To-day I saw its last drop pass away.

I give a wide range to the meaning of the word "imagination": to me it stands for the inner life, and is the collective name for the most beautiful faculties of the soul, for those which clothe ideas in the ornaments of imagery as well as for those which, turning toward the infinite, are perpetually meditating upon the invisible, and conceive it in images of unknown origin and of ineffable form. This is but little philosophical and is far removed from known psychologies; but on this point I trouble myself very little about men and the arrangement they have made of our faculties; I shatter their systems, which fetter me, and, free, I go as far away from them as possible, to reconstruct a soul and a world according to my own will.

I certainly cannot believe that our most living faculties die out like a flickering torch, and that all the inward springs are of a sudden stopped as though struck by a curse. But it is undeniable that life is interrupted, that the river of secret joys suspends its course, to open a way for tribes of afflictions and unknown desolations to pass through. I am now suffering this terrible invasion. I listen within me and no longer hear any sound of what used to charm me. Subtile and

blended murmurings, undulating choirs of distant voices, echoes of the secret songs of Nature, — all this beautiful torrent of sounds has ceased. Like a man who walks by night, carrying a torch, objects, as I advanced, appeared to be clothed in a brightness at once intense and soft; and beneath that radiance all forms, softened and glorified, seemed to bask as though in their element, and to feel unknown raptures which animated their features and imparted to them such beauty as was never seen. To-day I only cast a shadow; every form is opaque and branded with death. As in a midnight walk I pass on, wrapped in the sense of my own isolated existence among the motionless phantoms of all things.

My inner life recalls to mind that circle of Dante's *Inferno* where a crowd of souls rush headlong after a standard which is being borne rapidly along. The multitude of my thoughts, a crowd eager and tumultuous, but silent, like ghosts, rush restlessly along toward a fatal goal, a swaying and luminous form most irresistibly attractive, which flees with the speed of uncreated shapes. A deceptive guide, no doubt, for its flight is too seductive not to allure my soul into some cruel snare; but, whatever may be the result, I yield to the glimmering light. Like a

child on a journey, my spirit forever smiles at the beautiful visions which it sees within it and will never see elsewhere. I dwell with the inner elements of things; I ascend the rays of the stars and the current of the rivers up to the centre of the mysteries of their generation. I am admitted by Nature to the most secluded of her divine abodes, to the point where are the springs of universal life; there I detect the cause of motion, and I hear in all its freshness the first song of created beings. Who has not surprised himself watching the shadows of summer clouds coursing over the face of the country? I do that very thing while writing this. I watch the shadow of my fancies, as it flies over this paper like scattered flakes forever swept along by the wind. Such is the nature of my thoughts, of all my intellectual endowment, — a little floating vapour which melts away. But even as the air delights in condensing the evaporations of the waters, and in peopling itself with beautiful clouds, so does my fancy seize upon the emanations of my soul, gather them together, shape them at its pleasure, and let them drift in the current of that secret breath which passes through every intelligence. This is the happiness of my instincts, — an evanescent and unstable happiness which often melts beneath my

kisses and dissolves in my embrace. Thus neither my serenities nor my storms are of long duration; alas! neither are my resolutions permanent. Whatever of philosophy and practical reason there is in my soul groans and suffers. Like a vessel which has unfurled too many sails, I hold a blind, mad course through life, sustaining at every moment the most cruel damages.

One enjoys and admires, in a picture, the features of an unknown man, perchance of a shepherd, dreaming on a mountain, representing intelligence in the midst of creation, the sonorous and deep echo in the centre of melodies, the divine mirror among the innumerable images of the increate which God has sent forth upon their journey, — that moving display of symbols which is called the universe. The real personages, the shepherd and myself, are poor creatures who instinctively and as a pastime in our solitude watch the clouds as they sail past, and listen to the whistling of the wind.

January 26th, 1835. — I have unfolded my little drama under your eyes; you have listened to it, and have followed its movements with a tender interest which has given me all my courage. And yet what were you watching? What one follows with the eye, during summer evenings: a winged insect which spins around and

flies through the air with a gentle buzzing of its wings. Like it, my thought foolishly takes a capricious flight which leads nowhere. I have acquired enough philosophy to walk resolutely through practical life, and to rise above certain misfortunes which formerly would have crushed me. But I do not possess any control over my thought. It has no other guide than an unwearied instinct to fly far away from the common haunts, as though liberty consisted in evasion, and truth were reached at the end of an endless journey. Thus, notwithstanding the smoothing of my material pathway, I experience scarcely less weariness in living; for the disquietude of the intellect is an evil equal to the uncertainty of the morrow. Poetry has no longer a place in my soul, no more do I enjoy her familiar communings; by the absence of a sweet burden, by the chilling of the habits of my imagination, I realize that she has taken flight; and besides, I hear her voice afar off, from on high, already faint and dying away in the distance. At times it seems as though she called me, having found it better beyond the darkness than here, for now I rest all my hopes upon the unseen world; and at other times it seems as though she bade me farewell. Yet what matters it that what we call imagination, poetry, should leave me or

should stay with me? It cannot arrest or hasten the course of my destiny; and, whether I foresee or not from here below, I shall none the less contemplate some day what is reserved for me. Ought I not rather, neglecting all these anxieties, to apply myself to extending my positive knowledge, and to prefer the smallest luminous thread of exact truth to the vague glimmerings in which I drown myself? The man who accounts for any mathematical truth is more advanced in the comprehension of the true than is the most beautiful imagination. He has acquired an inviolable possession in the domain of the intellect; he can dwell there for eternity. The poet is driven from exile to exile, and will never have a sure abode.

February 2nd. — We lost Marie on the 22nd of January, at nine o'clock in the evening.

After the happiness of dying before those whom we love, I know of no greater sign of the favour of Heaven than to be admitted to the bedside of a dying friend; to follow him as far as we can into the shadow of death; to become partly initiated into the deep mystery wherein he disappears; to take faithful and incorruptible impressions from his face; and to thus acquire a treasure of sorrows and of secret thoughts which shall be sufficient to fill the longest life.

I have seen nothing except through the representation which the soul creates for itself, as far as it is able, of what passes far away from us. Poor Marie! I have pictured in spirit the scene of your end; I have eagerly contemplated through the shadows of this terrible dream what passed between you and death; I have seen your calm and peaceful features, your sweetness, and the beauty of your soul, which the last agony had not yet dimmed, still dwelling on your lips. At times this vision becomes confused and disappears, but is soon restored, for I call it back with fatal power. During its longest absences, it gives place to another image more released from the shadows of death: Marie appears to me in vague and uncertain outlines, hovers before my imagination, and, without touching the ground, guides me to those spots which she loved, and through which we so often wandered together.

She has vanished from this visible world; she belongs to the regions of thought; she is now accessible only to that powerful faculty which rises from the soul toward spiritual abodes, mounts up to them in secret through the shadows, and redescends, accompanied by a sweet phantom. How many times did our fancies mount together toward those indistinct and veiled

abodes which attracted us by their mystery! How many times did they gently knock at the gates of that world of intelligences and of pure spirits! And now thou art merged, absorbed into that ocean of spiritual substance! My thought forms thee within itself by the same process and of the same essence as those sweet dreams which used to mingle with thine and turn toward the same celestial goal.

I strive to understand this, to reconcile the thought which seeks her on the earth with that which no longer looks for her there. With sadness I reform the habits of my imagination, that was wont to fly with such delight toward the beloved wilderness; at every moment I am forced to turn it from its way, and to start it on the new road which it must henceforth take, — strange and bitter confusion of two worlds, terrible displacement of the soul in the pursuit of her who has changed her dwelling-place! But no; I am happy to turn my gaze toward the world into which she has vanished, to carry all my communings, all my aspirations, toward the invisible, which has robbed us of her presence. Who will make me share in the treasures gathered from those supreme moments? Who will initiate me into those mysteries in which I would

wish to be forever enshrouded? I hunger after sorrow and baleful knowledge.[1] . . .

9th. — The work is finished; doubt is no longer rampant; I am convinced. I have draped in mourning the charming scene of my memories. The sweet face whose outlines wavered in my memory, — for time and absence spread over the dearest features a mist which blurs them and makes them indistinct, — the sweet face has been restored to my view; but my imagination has done even as death did, — it has covered her with pallor, it has touched her lips with the tint of the expiring rose, and has closed her eyes forever. I have shattered the idea of her terrestrial existence, I have effaced her from the outward world. There has been a complete change; an entire individuality of actual life has been withdrawn from my soul, and there have come in its place the incorruptible images and forms of the unknown world which lies near us. My bosom filled with love, I clasp these new apparitions, which wear cherished forms, and look attentively upon them. I pray that I may draw within me as many as I can of these secret guests around whom

[1] After this fragment, a leaf has been detached from the original manuscript, and several lines are effaced at the top of the following page.

sorrow clings and who strengthen sorrow in its hopes. Still the consciousness of the terrible blow is not weakened ; however much the soul may wish to withdraw within its shadows, to lament apart without external sign, the necessity of tears oppresses it. Then, if my eyes resist, I say like Hippolyte : *Dost thou then not weep, dost thou then no more recall the good days of a year ago with Marie ?*

12*th.* — Of what world should we dream ? What secret beauties of Nature could attract and hold fast our minds with greater power than the shores beyond which Marie has vanished ? I know that she is there, that the darkness of the spirit-world hides her from us. How attractive does this darkness become, and what charm there lies for me in venturing to approach this unknown world ! I go forward ; I imagine as best I can the dwelling-places of pure spirit ; I strive to represent to myself a soul restored to its element, the secrets of its new life, and all the phases of its imperishable condition. The imagination, carrying its terrestrial habits into its visions, clothes the cherished soul in form, and I see Marie with her earthly features renewed in the heavens. But often, sorrow, for a moment driven away, is born again from the very fashioning of these sweet

phantoms; it comes upon me amid the most soothing visions. She is, then, I say to myself, nothing more than a thought; she is, then, no longer accessible except to the reveries of my soul! With difficulty I escape from the oppressive and human sadness of this idea. Sometimes I avoid it by starting anew on the pilgrimage of retrospection. The light and silent footsteps of my imagination return to the beloved paths. Like Paul wandering over his island, I return, led by an irresistible attraction, to the site of the shipwreck. A few days ago, in a library where I found myself alone, I came upon a book from which we used to read during our long and sympathetic evenings. I opened it. . . . How can I express what arose from it, and the keenness of the memories which slept in those lines as in so many furrows? How many tears did I shed over this good Colin d'Harleville, so gay, so charming! Thus all is changed to mourning. Come back all, — memories, sweet emanations of the past, shadows of what has vanished! return into my soul, even as at the fall of night the little birds and the bees, which had strayed over the country, fly back toward their haunts and gather there together. Come back all; night is falling. Thus do I throw off the scent those excessive regrets which

no consolation dares to approach. I surround them with this murmuring throng of memories. They listen to their mingled voices and look upon their features of a thousand hues; the hurried course of sorrowful thoughts gradually abates and grows calmer, so as to flow on like a sluggish and melancholy stream.

March 24th. — Formerly my sorrows were watered, I might say; they have now become arid. My griefs once contained in their floods some drops of liquid balm; to-day the pure liquor no longer leaves any sweet deposit to be tasted lingeringly and in secret.

I used to fancy the soft and tender glimmerings of the twilight to be sweet and beneficent particles left by the burning river of light which had but lately traversed the heavens; and I looked upon the sky with profound pleasure as with melancholy charm it became penetrated by that ethereal alluvium which softened it. I followed in the sunset what was passing within me at the same hour; and the evening and I both sank to rest in the same appeasement of our sorrow.

Calming sweetness of those lingering sights, conformity of my soul with the spirit of natural scenes, what has become of you? I am alone. No longer do I feel or experience anything but

my own life. The bitterness of an existence deeply impaired by a thousand internal poisons, — such is the sole savour of my days.

27th. — I am well aware that were I to make a resolute effort I could accustom my intellect to a severe logic, to a regular discipline of my faculties, to a consecutive grasp of useful truths. But I have been given so little power of deduction, so little method and logical observation, that such an attempt could never be other than feeble and sickly.

Calmness in thought marks the power of the intellect. Now, all my attempts are but creations without coherency, — convulsive, breaking off suddenly at every moment, like the speech of a madman. I lose control of myself; a fatal confusion distracts my mind; the ardour of certain ideas intoxicates it; it scours the country on the wings of nameless fancies. But what is the use of complaining? Were I a labourer I should perhaps blame the weakness of my arms and the quick exhaustion of my breath. Never in my life have I dug the soil, and on that score I am tranquil. If I had limited the work of my understanding to what was required by my condition, and had not put its strength to such severe tests, I should be tranquil on that score also. But it is done; to console one's self for it is the easiest

thing. Why not also reascend the current of habit and thus return to my original tranquillity? May I close forever the outlet foolishly made for the secret floods contained within my soul! There may they sleep! These floods, — they are but a few drops; no need to fear their tempests.

If I have still a few more steps to take here below, I would that it might be with composure. I know not whence I come nor whither I go. One should at least walk tranquilly in the peace of an ignorance which will soon be enlightened. True wisdom is patience with what endureth not.

There is more strength and beauty in the well-guarded secret of ourselves and our thoughts than in the display of a whole heaven which we may have within us. Thus did Marie: the riches and the sweetness of her soul were not revealed other than in the charm of her voice and the peaceful enchantment which her life shed on all around her. This is not discouragement that I am indulging in. Although I am still subject to certain returns of this old infirmity, I have so reduced it that it no longer impedes the positive advance of my life. The eager and restless nature of my mind, in no wise suited to the strong and severe operations of the reason, forbids

me all hope of making any serious progress in the philosophy of this world. Now, this order of research taken away, I see nothing worth an effort of thought. Consequently, when I shall have acquired enough common knowledge to distribute during my lifetime among small boys, I ought to be contented. I shall then possess my share of knowledge. This is a very small and restricted ambition. But for a man like myself, who has not in his heart enough energy to produce even a mere *ignis fatuus* of passion, and who, in his intellect, has only just enough to be fruitlessly tormented, is not this little the best? That little which is needed to regulate one's material life, and yet to deal peaceably and deliberately with men and things, conscious of a profound ignorance of the impenetrable destiny which urges us on, and also, perchance, with a touch of revery.

April 3rd. — The moral expanse which my life includes is like a desert covered by a pale, motionless, and changeless sky. Its temperature is sufficiently warm to have excited a certain fermentation in the fecundity of the soil; but, as it ever preserves the same degree, the internal sap, drawn up and heated to a corresponding point, cannot rise beyond, and finds itself condemned to ferment monotonously, without

rest and unproductive, like the water which simmers without interruption, neither increasing nor diminishing its murmur, over the constant heat of a small fire. The result for me is a continuous, subtile, and obstinate suffering. Eager, restless, and seeing only by glimpses, my mind is afflicted with all the evils which would be the sure result of a youth destined never to reach its manhood. I grow old and I exhaust myself in such petty transports of the mind, in such worthless ebullitions of the intellect, and all that stirs within me makes so little progress, and all that cannot stir sees things from such a distance, that it would have been a hundred times better had I been given an intellect blind and paralytic. The suffering, at first somewhat restricted, has rapidly increased. Like a disease which is diffused throughout the blood, it now shows itself everywhere, and under the strangest developments. My head is wasting away. Like a tree that is decaying at the top, I feel, when the wind blows, as though at my summit it were passing through many a withered branch. Work is intolerable to me, or rather impossible. Application does not bring on sleep, but a keen and nervous repugnance which hurries me away I know not where, into the streets and public squares. The spring, whose blessings used to

come each year quietly and secretly to charm me in my retreats, crushes me this year under a burden of sudden heat. Life does not descend from heaven in the freshness of the night, neither is it distributed in the rain-drops, nor does it melt and dissolve throughout the whole expanse of the air ; it falls from on high like a weight.

I wish that some event might release me from my present position. If I were free, I would embark for some country where I should be obliged to form new habits.

8*th.* — My head is a waste. I suffer there a pain partly moral, partly physical. On certain days I feel as if my nerves were knotted together by dull, resistless contractions. Excess of cold or heat, ennui, certain motions of the head, internal irritations, contribute to this. All ideas then leave me. A strange stupor pervades me ; I remain motionless, feeling nothing but the heavy, overwhelming immutability of life, which seems brought to a standstill in a state of incomprehensible distress, and the beating of an artery which quivers at that spot in my head.

30*th.* — When suffering has passed away, and life remains, pale, enfeebled, but full of confidence and of calm enjoyment in watching the

extinction of the last symptoms of disease, then even the most self-centred soul is in a mood for lengthy and somewhat vague disquisitions, a mingling of sad memories and a thousand pleasing schemes. With the entrance of the first rays of returning health, there flock in languishing dreams, and visions sweet and indefinite, like atoms swimming in their waves of light. This condition is dearer to the soul than health. It is in these moments that from various sides of my being, as from the quiet fields beneath a gray, cloudless sky, rise gentle sounds, signs of a life which returns from afar. These sounds are made by my thoughts, which, as they come out of their sad torpor, give a gentle flutter of timid joy, and begin a converse full of reminiscences or of hopes. At other times, when slower to awaken, I hear within me, during these hours of calm, only slight and infrequent rustlings, as in a wood where birds are sleeping on the topmost branches. To-day, released from their torpor, they speak connectedly and with tranquillity of the sorrows they have endured. They are awaiting life, the future, the coming of the successive mysteries of existence, while strengthening each other with the eloquence of inward exhortations, or by hushing themselves at times to listen to the rushing of

the secret torrent of philosophy which flows beneath some lives, like those which swept through mediæval cloisters.

The greater part of those faculties which constitute mental power are either entirely wanting in me or are merely indicated, as, on the trees, dead or barren buds represent those branches which were to shoot forth. Co-ordination, comparison, deduction, are for me processes so momentous, and so rapidly exhaustive of my intellectual powers, that, even though I am not entirely prevented from strong mental exercise, the faculty for it that is still left to me is almost useless. When I want to connect one truth with another, I resemble a man who, with his half-paralyzed arm, strives to fasten together two objects : he raises his arm with difficulty ; it falters, shakes, and always misses its aim. Many causes, in both my internal and external natures, turned me early toward introspection. My soul was my first horizon. For a long time I have been contemplating it. I watch, as they come up from the depths of my being, vapours which rise as from a deep valley, and take on form only at the breath of chance, — indescribable phantoms which ascend slowly and continuously. The powerful fascination exercised upon the soul, as well as upon the senses, by the monotonous and

continuous passing of some wandering thing, whatever it may be, holds possession of me and does not allow my eyes to turn aside for one moment from this spectacle.

I make my living by the help of the little Latin which I learned at college and have not since lost, I know not why. The courses are so long, the tasks so varied, that they occupy the best part of my days. I suffer great loss through these material occupations; my stream is lost in the sands. I can reserve scarcely anything from this excessive usurpation of daily subsistence over the time of thought; and I foresee that during my whole life I shall always be forced to throw this divine prey a sacrifice to cruel necessity. I am persuaded that the time must come when we shall pass our days in perpetual contemplation, with a surety as to our peace; but, here below, to toil, to exhaust ourselves for the sake of mere raiment in the future, to despoil the spirit so as to buy for it a place among men (too highly considered, alas, were I to call them strangers) engrossed in their everlasting petty affairs and of a depressing mediocrity, — all this is a mighty trial to the soul, and one which strangely reverses the meaning of this word, "Life."

May 7th. — You are suffering to-day from the

poetry which fills your being and has no outlet. This sorrow is terrible, but so beautiful! Console yourself in the noble and rare nature of your torments: there are so many men who for trifles suffer as much as you do! You are privileged in sorrow; what more do you wish for here below?

What every man of a nature apart rather than superior guards with the greatest vigilance, is the secret of his soul and of the inner workings of his thoughts. I love that god Harpocrates, his index-finger on his lips.

14*th*. — Who can say that he has found a haven of rest unless he has reached some height, the loftiest he is able to attain? I have been for some time gazing toward those temples of serene wisdom erected by ancient philosophy upon summits so lofty that few can reach them. Would that I could storm these heights! When shall I find my rest? In olden times the gods, willing to reward the virtue of certain mortals, would envelop them in the clasp of some vegetable growth, which, as it sprang up, absorbed in its embrace their worn-out bodies and substituted for their life, exhausted by old age, a life strong and silent, such as throbs beneath the bark of the oaks. These mortals, become stationary, moved only at the tips of their boughs swaying

in the winds. Is not this a type of the wise man and his serenity? Does he not continually inwrap himself in this metamorphosis of the few men beloved of the gods? To fill one's self with a self-chosen elemental life; to enshroud one's self; to seem to men as firmly rooted and grounded, and as full of grave unconcern, as some great forest tree-trunks; to give forth on occasion only responses undefined but deep, as when some heavy tree-tops re-echo the murmurs of the sea, — this is a condition of existence which seems to me worthy of endeavour, and one well suited to be a bulwark against men and the vicissitudes of fortune.

June 4th. — Why should I be so saddened by the sight of mediocre productions? Never do I chance to open a book of the kind we looked through yesterday that I do not leave it with my mind ailing and my imagination cast down. Is it mournful pity for such a spectacle of powerless vanity, one of the saddest I know of, or is it caused by self-consciousness and introspection? What matters it which it is? The beauty of man does not lie in such feelings. Great would be the mediocrity of the soul could it not endure that of the mind. I understand all this, and yet I linger in my weakness. Great God, what kind of moral education is given to-day! I am

twenty-five years old; ten years were spent in schools, and as yet I have not opened the elementary textbook of inward strength and guidance of the moral sense! Never a word was said to me of the great things of the soul. It is only since yesterday that, old child that I am, I am beginning to get a glimpse of man, but at a great distance and on those serene heights which can scarcely be reached by a step already feeble. Inveterately weak and all crippled by baneful habits, I drag myself along and progress with pain. But I understand, I see; and if during my life I may not attain to moral beauty, I shall at least die with my eyes fixed upon it. Still there is in me a very untoward sign: it is that on the morrow I do not find myself above the acts of the day before, and that my soul seems to remain at the level of these same acts, — of acts that belong to days long past. My mind, on the contrary, sees all that it does fast growing old. What happiness to rise above one's past, and what joy to be able to despise one's self from day to day in one's own actions! What a destiny were I to remain coeternal with myself in the moral condition I am in at the present!

5th. — My God, how I suffer in life! not in its accidents (a little philosophy is sufficient for these), but in itself, in its substance, apart from

all phenomena. I am advancing in age; my mind casts off a thousand relics on its way; bonds are broken; prejudices fall away; I am beginning to raise my head above the waters: but existence itself remains fettered, — ever the same sad point, marking the centre of the circumference. Is there a philosophy and are there rules that touch this evil? I am getting to know less and less about this groundwork of life and what I ought to do. Oh Stoicism, appointed to fight sorrow by strength and constancy of soul, thou knewest not how to fight life except by death. and we are no farther advanced than thou wert!

12*th*. — I do not commit my bad actions impetuously. In my inmost depths there lie I know not what dead and fatal waters like that deep pool in which perished the poet Stenio.

22*nd*. — What makes me at moments despair of myself is the intensity of my sufferings in small things, and the always blind and mistaken use of my moral powers. I sometimes put forth, in turning over a few grains of sand, an amount of energy sufficient to roll a rock to a mountain-top. I could bear enormous burdens better than this light and almost impalpable dust which clings to me. Each day I perish imperceptibly; my life slips away through invisible pin-holes. Not long ago I was told that contempt of men

would carry me a long way ; yes, and especially if it be mingled with bitterness. My surroundings weary me. I know not where I would like to live, nor in what profession ; but I detest my own, which lowers me and makes me miserable. At every turn it places me at variance with the little philosophy which I have acquired during my serious and leisure hours ; it irritates me against men who are still children. How I hate myself in the midst of these trifles, and how vehemently do I long to leap onto a free shore, and to thrust back with my foot the odious boat which bears me along !

July 11th. — Who is the true God, — the God of the city or the God of the desert ? To which should we turn ? Tastes long fostered, impulses of the heart, accidents of life, decide the choice. We carry within ourselves a thousand fatalities. What knowledge have we of the powers which urge us on, and which is the best among all these ? The man of the cities laughs to himself at the lonely dreams of the recluse ; and the recluse rejoices in his separation and at finding himself, like an island of the great ocean, far away from the continents and bathed by unknown waters. Most to be pitied are those who, thrown between these two contraries, stretch out their arms to both.

October 13th. — I have been travelling. I know not what impulse of my destiny carried me along the banks of a river as far as the sea. All along the borders of this river I saw plains where Nature was strong and gay, royal and ancient dwellings stamped with memories which hold their place in the sad legend of humanity, many cities, and at the end the surging ocean. Thence I returned into the interior, to the region of great forests, also abounding in limitless and ceaseless sounds. I shall long and vividly yearn for those fatigues to which I subjected myself, in crossing the broad plains, in mounting from one horizon to another, delighting in the wide expanse, and experiencing many times a day the grasp of those impressions which spring up on all sides in newly seen countries, and sweep down in flights upon the traveller. The tide of travel is full of charm. . . . Oh, who will set me afloat upon this Nile ? . . .

THE END.